

The Netas strike will go down in history. It has broken the reactionary mould of politics in Turkey, it has ushered in a new period of militant class struggle.

TURKEY SHOWS THE WAY

ON NOVEMBER 17 of last year 2,650 walked out of the Netas factory in Umraniye, Turkey. In addition a further 500 workers struck in the Netas workshops in Izmir and Ankara. Netas produces telephone exchanges and components. It is owned jointly by the Canadian trans-national Northern Telecom Ltd and the Foundation for Strengthening the Navy. Netas is therefore a typical example of imperialism exploiting workers in Turkey using native finance capital as a junior partner.

In 1986 the company hiked production and profits by 20% while keeping wages down. Of course whether the bosses are making a profit or a loss is not the question. Even if Netas was losing money the workers would still have to live. Netas workers demanded a 50% wage rise and elementary trade union rights — what they need for a basic existence.

This strike was of strategic importance. Why? Not simply because of the fact that it was the largest strike since the 1980 military coup. No, far more than that. Netas became the focal point of class struggle, indeed it embodied the hopes of all working people in Turkey against the authoritarian, reactionary state. As long as this strike did not end in a defeat for the workers, then the balance of class forces in Turkey would be shifted.

The strike however, did not end in defeat: we are delighted to inform our readers that the strikers of Netas have won a great victory, a great victory for all workers in Turkey and internationally!

Before the strike workers with 15 years service at Netas only received on average a net monthly wage of 90,000 Turkish Lira (TL) or about £90. This is not a low wage in Turkey. But when one considers that the rent for a shack in a shanty town is at least 30,000 TL and kitchen expenses of a family of four have long since passed the 100,000 TL mark, it is clear just how impoverished the Netas workers were.

Hard up they may be, lacking political vision they were not. When they walked out of the factories the strikers were shouting the slogan "bread, peace, freedom". In the conditions of Turkey this is a revolutionary slogan. Clearly, there was no Chinese Wall between economic and political struggle. In the words of a leading militant, Netas was "not just a strike over pay and conditions. What we were really doing is fighting for democracy and the right to organise trade unions freely."

Netas strikers not surprisingly therefore extended their solidarity to all workers, supported all other

strikes and democratic manifestations. They also took the lead in fighting for the key demand of trade union unity.

Although organised in the independent Otomobil-Is union, the workers of Netas supported the call for unity within Turk-Is (the equivalent of the TUC). This represented an important step forward in the fight against the reactionary authoritarian regime in Ankara.

Ironically the banning of the militant DISK trade union federation in 1980 has created the objective conditions for militant working class unity in 1987. Quite simply the attempt to cleanse the trade union movement of communism is backfiring. The yellow trade union is in danger of becoming far more red than DISK ever was.

This is very bad news for Turkish social democracy. Turkey's two rival social democratic parties are in crisis and crumbling. To stave off the inevitable, certain beleaguered leaders of social democracy are, with the help of the Socialist International, seeking to split Turk-Is. They want to resurrect a new, social democratic version of DISK. Norman Willis has lent his authority to this. (Of course, in the name of trade union unity in Britain the hypocritical Willis refused to discipline the scab EETPU).

While the Netas call for trade union unity was a slap in the face for the opportunist splitters, including Willis, it represented a powerful confirmation of the correctness of the strategy of the Communist Party of Turkey - *Worker's Voice*.

Iscinin Sesi (Worker's Voice), the paper of the CPT - IS has consistently campaigned for trade union unity in Turk-Is. Why should this be? After all, Turk-Is is, at least for the moment, under the leadership of a right wing bureaucracy. Well firstly, as a general principle, Leninists favour the organisation of the mass of workers into the largest possible bodies. But there is a second, much more immediate reason.

Comrade R. Yurukoglu's speech (September 1984) to the London meeting to commemorate the 64th anniversary of the foundation of the CPT pointed to this. He argued that in Turkey the disintegration of fascism was proceeding at a rapid pace and this would open up the prospect of successful mass work.

He has been proved correct. The fascist regime imposed in 1980 has gone and the mole of revolution is on the move again.

CPT - IS militants quickly came to appreciate that communist work in the trade unions was full of possibilities and was indeed central to

the fight to win the masses. Firstly, it provided a key to communist leadership of the proletariat as a whole. Secondly, with this, establishing proletarian hegemony over all oppressed classes would be within the Party's grasp.

Obviously to facilitate the growth of communism in the trade unions it would be a great help if advanced workers were in the same union as less advanced workers and were thus able to influence them. Because of this, trade union unity is something to be defended tooth and nail. *Iscinin Sesi* has therefore steadfastly opposed all attempts to split Turkey's trade union movement.

This stand found concrete expression in the Netas strike. *Iscinin Sesi's* slogan for trade union unity became one of the slogans of the strike. In fact, *Iscinin Sesi* slogans abounded. No wonder its circulation and that of its books and pamphlets has soared. The underground, illegal printing presses of the CPT - IS are working around the clock to meet the demand. Many workers are coming to regard *Iscinin Sesi* as their paper. Certainly, every copy is read by scores of workers, in the process moulding their class consciousness, educating them, organising them and preparing them for the revolution.

The CPT - IS have pointed out that given the disintegration of the monolithic fascist regime established after September 1980, the coming period has huge potential. Popular revolutionary energy, which convulsed social life in Turkey during the 1970s, was frozen by the terror of the September 12 reaction. Now the objective conditions are maturing that could bring into being a revolutionary situation even more profound than the one that gripped Turkey in the 1970s.

The sparks that will fire the tinder dry mood of the workers of Turkey are today being generated in class confrontations like Netas.

The Menshevik 'official' CPT and the petty bourgeois socialists obviously made noises in solidarity with Netas. But they hated the fact that the strikers took up *Iscinin Sesi* slogans and made them their own. They have no wish to see the working class go beyond the safe contours of bourgeois respectability.

Once on the high ground of class struggle, workers can clearly see that they need a genuinely revolutionary leadership if they are to storm the heavens. Workers who want to make revolution have no interest in supporting social democracy or even the much vaunted project of an Italian-style legal Communist Party. The opportunists therefore tried to

keep the Netas strike isolated. But in vain.

The politics of Netas meant that working people across Turkey were drawn to it. From factories big and small, from shanty town districts and from distant cities, workers came to support Netas. Support was not confined to the working class; for instance the theatres of Istanbul were made available for the Netas strikers to hold meetings and rallies and the peasants from around Izmir started to donate fruit and vegetables.

Netas also gave courage to others. Six hundred and thirty Perelli workers are already out, as is the Derby factory in Istanbul. Another major development has been in the engineering industry. Thirty thousand workers in the 177 factories of MESS (the engineering employers federation) are preparing for strike action in case talks over wages and conditions break down.

The Turkish state is suffering from nervousness and irresolution. It feared that if it used force to crush the strike, the Netas bacillus, far from being destroyed would spread a thousand times quicker and take on plague proportions. So it played it softly, softly. Nothing was done to provoke a working class explosion, and no wonder ...

Since 1980 workers have seen their real wages fall by 30%. Attempts to claw back what inflation has taken away have been severely restricted by the array of anti-trade union laws imposed in the wake of the coup of September 12 that year.

As we have said, Netas became the focal point for the aspirations of all working people in Turkey. They knew that victory for the Netas strike would be a victory for them all.

There was therefore a magnificent response to the solidarity campaign set up by the Netas strikers. Workers often gave a whole day's wage to ensure the strike was not hindered by lack of funds. The CPT - *Worker's Voice* used all the resources, contacts and vigour at its command to raise support. It made the strong point to communists and militant workers in other countries that if hard pressed workers in Turkey could afford to give a day's pay, workers abroad should have striven to give a week's pay.

Because we understood the key importance of this strike, *The Leninist* won many of its supporters to pledge an entire week's income to the strike fund — including unemployed comrades. We circulated the information about the strike and initiated messages of solidarity and pledges of financial support

through trade union branches (including from miners' branches which the Netas militants were particularly pleased to receive). Labour Party branches, Communist Party branches and solidarity campaigns.

Of course, we realised that our efforts were small in relation to what was actually needed in terms of international solidarity with a strike as important as this one. Even so, the work that Leninist comrades did contrasted starkly with the totally ignominious role played by the *Morning Star* in this strike. The Netas dispute was not mentioned by name even once during its thirteen week course. The only passing reference it got was in a small piece on February 16 reporting the visit of Scab Supremo Willis and others of his ilk to Istanbul where they were trying to aid the campaign to split the trade union movement of the working class in Turkey. The report also mentions the arrest of one of the Netas strikers, although without mentioning the strike by name.

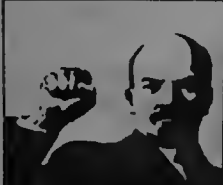
Finally, when the strike was over and the workers of Netas had won, the *Morning Star* chose to inform its readership that "over 2,500 Turkish workers in Istanbul, on strike for the past 13 weeks, have won a stunning victory ..." (February 21)!

We find the dirty hypocrisy of the clique of hacks who run the *Morning Star* absolutely breathtaking. How dare they bleat on in this report about how the leaders of Otomobil-Is "paid warm tribute" to the solidarity received from workers "outside the country". Unlike the Leninist organisation which sent small mountains of mailouts up and down the country about the strike and followed up contacts with hundreds of phone calls, model resolutions and collection sheets, the *Morning Star* did precisely nothing — as we have pointed out, they did not even mention the strike by name until the whole thing was

Our readers may ask themselves why the *Star* behaved in such a despicable way. Could it be anything to do with the fact that their Menshevik 'friends' from Turkey had nothing to do with the dispute and indeed were embarrassed by it.

Now all militants in the working class movement should join us in celebrating the victory of the heroic workers of Netas. The working class of Turkey is gathering strength to storm the heavens. Let us rejoice in the victory of our class brothers and sisters in Turkey: let us start learning the lessons that their struggles teach.

Jack Conrad



Fortnightly paper of the Leninists
of the Communist Party of Great Britain

COMMUNISTS should never make a fetish about parliamentary elections. Parliament is in essence only an electoral college and a debating chamber. As the Zircon affair proves real power lies elsewhere. Decisions made in the Cabinet and the City, in the old boys' network and the big four banks, in the giant monopolies of finance capital and the top brass in the armed forces render democracy under capitalism a sham. For this reason communists have argued against the parliamentary system. We know full well that parliament cannot be made into an institution of socialism. Even if shorn of the geriatric House of Lords its structure, tradition and rigidity make it useless as a vehicle for revolution. No, if we are ever to see socialism, parliament and the rest of the bourgeois bureaucratic/military state will have to be shattered by revolution.

Through revolution organs of working class struggle can become transformed, like soviets were in October 1917, into organs of working class state power which are a thousand times more democratic than the mother of parliaments.

Nonetheless this does not mean parliament and elections are irrelevant. They create the illusion of popular democracy, if not the reality.

Communists have therefore stood in elections. But they have done so in order to break illusions in parliament, not with the reformist idea of taking hold of it and using it. Those left reformists who think they can transform parliament invariably transform themselves into right reformists once they sniff ministerial office. Communists have therefore also used elections to expose the socialist credentials of reformism.

This is particularly important in Britain where one and a half centuries of imperialist plunder have made illusions in parliament and reformism particularly deep. Lenin was well aware of this problem. That is why he advocated that the CPGB apply to affiliate to the Labour Party and support Labour candidates in elections.

The Labour Party had just adopted its clause four. It was pretending it would introduce socialism. As this claim had never been tested in practice many believed Labour was genuinely socialist. Lenin wanted the CPGB to help Labour into office in order to expose it, in order to break workers from it and in order to create the basis for a mass CPGB.

Lenin was quite clear — affiliation to the Labour Party, with the precondition of the complete freedom of criticism, would help to expose the Labour leaders, as would their refusal to countenance it. As to supporting Labour in elections, with characteristic bluntness Lenin said this support was like a rope supporting a hanging man.

How the opportunists have gutted Lenin's advice of its revolutionary content and turned it into dead doctrine to excuse their parliamentary cretinism! They think a Labour government offers the only serious possibility for radical change.

This has nothing to do with Leninism. Labour will never introduce socialism. We have seen many Labour governments and they have all been just as reactionary as the Tory ones. If Labour was led by a Benn, a Hutton or a Tariq Ali we might be correct to call for a tactical vote for Labour. But Kinnoch does not even promise socialism. No wonder the masses have few illusions in Kinnoch. Those who propose to vote Labour do so because they can see no alternative. Our task is to build that alternative not excuse voting Labour.

So we say vote for CPGB candidates with your eyes open and fight to reforge the CPGB. Organise the class to fight whoever wins the next election.

The Editor

Six month subscription rates, Britain and Ireland £5; Europe £8, Rest of World £10 (airmail £17.50). Annual subscription rates: Britain and Ireland £10; Institutions £20; Europe £16; Institutions £26; Rest of World £20 (airmail £35). Institutions £30 (airmail £45). Back copies: Issues 1-6 (theoretical journal) £1 each plus 25p p&p. Issues of paper (from issue 7) 30p each plus 10p p&p. All cheques payable to November Publications Ltd. Printed by: Morning Litho Printers Ltd. (TU), Unit 5 St. Marks Industrial Est., 439 North Woolwich Road, London E16 2BS. Published by: November Publications, BCM Box 928, London WC1N 3XX. © World copyright March 1987

LETTERS

My paper

I first came across *The Leninist* approximately three years ago — I was immediately impressed by it. I found the paper to be extremely intelligent, serious and interesting. Its hard line Marxist-Leninist stance had a very positive and liberating effect on me. I realised that I had discovered a genuinely revolutionary paper at last! Since that time I have watched the paper's development with keen interest. Increasingly, I have come to look on *The Leninist* as my paper.

Personally, I have never been in any doubt that what is needed to once and for all smash this most reactionary of capitalist states, is nothing short of a Bolshevik-style party. I have no time for those who ridicule this idea. I find the liberal nonsense which emanates from the so-called leadership of the CPGB to be deeply offensive to me. I am genuinely embarrassed to be associated with much of the official literature — pamphlets, leaflets and so on — sent down from on high by the rotten clique in control of the Party. I have no such embarrassment where *The Leninist* is concerned. Indeed, I am happy to associate myself with the paper.

I would like to see a regular section devoted entirely to the question of the USSR and CPSU. Perhaps half a page, or full page even, could be set aside for this purpose? Even the occasional supplement would suffice. I am not for one moment trying to imply that your paper does not deal adequately with the question of the USSR. It's just that I would like to see more of it. I am very interested in what you do write about the Soviet Union, as I believe your attitude towards it is fundamentally correct.

In conclusion, I consider *The Leninist* to be one of the best revolutionary papers I've come across. I concur with most of what I read in it. I am ready to defend it against the attacks of the enemies of Marxism-Leninism — not least of all the attacks of those within the Party who detest anything that is not riddled with trendy liberal drivel. I'd like you to look on me as a supporter of the paper. You may be interested to know that I've already been threatened with expulsion for daring to "read and support *The Leninist*."

Please find enclosed a small donation to your funds.

Yours fraternally,

Dave Adams
Scotland

Scottish Teachers

I've been following your coverage of the teachers' dispute. Your analysis of events south of the border is very good, but you seem to be confused about events in Scotland.

First, the EIS national executive is hardly left (*The Leninist* November 20). The politics of the executive majority is strongly new realist. This includes the CP and the SNP members! Indeed, in Scottish TUC and Labour Party circles the EIS's moderate campaign — high on publicity, low on activity — is hailed as the alternative to the type of action taken by the ultra-left NUM (meaning of course, Arthur Scargill and his allies, rather than Mick McGahey and George Bolton, for whom there is warm affection amongst Scottish trade union bureaucrats!).

You may be interested to know

that three known CP supporters on the EIS executive, Steve Dowds, David Drever and Les Fulton — two at least on the *Morning Star* wing — advocated a yes vote for the Tory/Labour/executive package (truly a popular front!).

Indeed, at our November SGM it was Fife CP headteacher, Les Fulton, who publicly revealed the executive's real strategy for the last 2 years. "No union at present can expect both improved pay and conditions."

You are correct in your outline of some of the weaknesses in the left in Scotland. The dominant Broad Left approach is represented most clearly by Campaign for a Fighting Union (CAFU), politically close to the Socialist Teachers Alliance (STA) in England and Wales. CAFU refused to take a clear stand against the executive's pay review strategy and christened the executive moderate tactics — targetted and rota action — as "sophisticated".

However, this approach has always been opposed by Scottish Rank and File (R&F). At the June 1984 EIS AGM in Rothesay, we managed to get the support of a third of the delegates against the review strategy and have continued this opposition throughout. We have consistently argued against selective action and for action involving all members.

However, you are wrong in your attack on "militants in the EIS [being] unwilling to link up on an all-Britain rank and file basis" (November 20). Both Scottish R&F and CAFU have sent delegates to alternative LAPAC meetings in England and Wales. We both worked very hard for the November 1985 march which "in retrospect [was] the most important turning point in the struggle". (October 9)

When meaningful unity was sabotaged by the EIS leadership and the STA, it was the R&F '83 that did much of the pushing, so that "a number of branches ignored this call [to sabotage] and marched with the EIS". A joint R&F leaflet was given to Scottish and London teachers on this march. More recently, every delegate to the NUT SGM in Blackpool also received a joint R&F appeal for united action.

Whilst I appreciate that lack of information has hampered your Scottish reports, there appears to be a political blindspot when it comes to R&F south of the border. You certainly know of R&F '83 since our delegate was introduced to a Leninist supporter by R&F '83. Could this have been your reporter Tony Coughlin?!

As an activist in Scottish R&F I would welcome a clear commitment from *The Leninist* to R&F north and south of the border. As a member of the Revolutionary Democratic Group I would also like to see a united front of Marxists within the R&F groups, the better to combat Broad Leftism and anarcho-syndicalist notions.

Yours fraternally,
Allan Armstrong (Revolutionary Democratic Group, Editor *Scottish Rank and File Teacher*),
Edinburgh.

Open Letters

In 1985 the Socialist Workers Party (SWP) began making Open Letter appeals to Marxists and socialists. They claimed "that there are many people who would like to see a socialist alternative who are not in our party" and that "if these people were together in a single organisation, we would be in a very good position to put up resistance to the advance of the

right". They later urged "all those who regard themselves as Marxists have the responsibility of showing that they are serious about the need for a revolutionary party, not in some indefinite future but now."

The Revolutionary Democratic Group responded to this appeal. We wrote to the SWP on July 1 1985, November 4 1985, March 14 1986, May 1 1986 and July 1986. We received no response on any occasion. We then wrote two protest letters to *Socialist Worker*. Neither of these were printed. Our recent letters called on them to either open discussions or provide us with a reason or explanation for their refusal to uphold their own publicly declared policy. Again we had no response.

A new twist has been added to this sad story of the SWP's unprincipled open letters. Recently on four occasions, members of the RDG have been banned from SWP public meetings. So much for building socialist unity!

The only reasonable conclusion to be drawn from this is that the SWP appeal was a sham. It has proved to be an opportunist attempt to latch onto a genuine need for unity in our movement, then turning this into a sectarian tactic. **Revolutionary Democratic Group** January 1987.

Iran

Following the excessive rainfall and flooding in vast areas of the southern provinces of Iran, including Fars, Kerman and Khouzestan, over two thousand inhabitants of this region have died. Hundreds of thousands of people have lost their homes. Hundreds of villages have been completely destroyed.

Wishing to avoid at all costs the reallocation of resources which are being wasted at the fronts of the reactionary Iran-Iraq war, the regime of the Islamic Republic of Iran decidedly distorts the facts and reports only on the minor and insignificant consequences of the recent floods. Surprisingly, the Western media have remained silent about this disaster.

Despite being very well aware of the full dimensions of the disaster, Khomeini's regime is not prepared to provide the people affected with the minimum necessities of life. Instead it devotes all its resources to ensure the continuation of the war.

We appeal to international organisations, in particular the United Nations and the Red Cross, and other humanitarian institutions, including churches, charity organisations such as Oxfam etc, to render their support and sympathy to the peoples in the flooded areas. **Organisation of Iranian Peoples' Fedaiian**

Afghanistan

The unfolding of the Afghan revolution has raised the hopes and expectations of the country's 20 million workers and peasants. As they are mobilising to fulfil their aspirations our duty is to support and defend their cause. The Afghan government is in the process of materialising a massive programme of social reform such as legalisation of trade unions, a massive literacy drive, abolition of serfdom and feudalism, complete religious freedom and minority rights, land reform, steps to improve the status of women, introduction of a free health service and cancellation of debt owed by peasants.

The government has launched a policy of national reconciliation in-

viting exiles to return and help in building the new Afghanistan.

However, regional and international adversaries of Afghanistan are trying to damage the revolution through economic, diplomatic and military means. They consider Afghanistan as a threat because of the example it sets.

Western media have also joined in the crusade against Afghanistan. They have not only ignored the progress and achievements of the revolution but have indulged in grotesque lies about it.

We have produced a poster in an effort to publicise the truth about Afghanistan. I would therefore request that you advertise this for us. For further information, people can contact me at the address below.

Mohammed Arif (Secretary)
Friends of Afghanistan Society
366 York Road
London SW18 5GX
Tel: 01 874 6295.

Poll Tax

We would like to order copies of the UWC leaflet and petition. We intend to utilise these in the course of the campaigning that we are doing against the new Poll Tax being introduced here. This viciously anti-working class measure will affect the unemployed particularly severely as it will be levied on all adults including the unemployed. It is expected to be about five pounds a week for everybody on the electoral register. I don't have to tell your readers what this will mean to the unemployed, nor that if they can get away with the Poll Tax here, they will not wait long before introducing it in England.



The UWC on the march.

The Poll Tax is the first step on the road back to a property qualification for the franchise. The arguments used for it by the Tories here rehearse those used in the 19th century against universal suffrage: that only those who pay for the public purse, or as it used to be put, those with a stake in society, should be allowed to control it.

In the course of campaigning against it we have collected thousands of signatures across the length and breadth of the country. We want to utilise the opportunity to circulate UWC petitions as well.

The remarkable thing about this campaign is the number of people we have come across who quite spontaneously give vent to revolutionary sentiments when we talk to them. Wherever we go ordinary people are keen to sign and express their hatred of the government.

We know that petitions are not enough. Time and again, people we speak to say that stronger measures are needed, we hear obviously respectable working men and women say things like: "give us a

gun and I'll shoot that bitch Thatcher." Or they say, "she can drive us so far and no further, she'll have us out in the streets at this," or "I'm not a communist mind, but it'll come down to violence in the end, if it was OK for Castro and the Cubans why can't we do it?"

Old women complain that fine strong young men are standing around like Fife, Glasgow and Paisley where the working class are definitely ready for openly revolutionary propaganda. Hopefully, the UWC can contribute to this.

WP Cockshott
(Convenor Workers Party of Scotland)
Edinburgh

UWC questions

I feel a political initiative was needed re unemployment and congratulate you on the Charter, which I feel is very good.

However, you have ignored the loose federation of Unemployment Unions and also the National Federation of Claimants Unions. Surely we should be urging unemployed workers to adopt the Charter and fight for it inside these organisations and for a joint National Conference to build an Unemployed Workers Movement, etc. You have also made no reference to the earlier Right to Work Campaign organised by the SWP. In recent months there was, I believe, a march "inspired" by the Militant Tendency: where does that fit in?

You mention Wal Hannington and the NUWM and say it made gains for unemployed workers. This is undoubtedly true, but to not give specific details of these gains leaves the uninitiated wondering. Many are still cynical about marches and demos and ask 'what do they achieve at the end of the day?' If you could give some details (not a catalogue) of some of the NUWM positive results, we may be able to build on this.

Now in respect to political initiatives, I have heard people say that *The Leninist* wants comrades to stay in the Communist Party to help reforge the Party and that the Party is sacrosanct, etc: therefore how can it issue a political initiative outside of the Party? Is not *The Leninist* the 'Militant Tendency' in the Communist Party? I am a little nonplussed and would like to hear your answer.

Fraternally
Ron Hamilton
Ipswich

Extreme Behaviour

On December 4 1986 a letter was sent to you requesting that you remove our name from your mailing list.

We regret that this has not been done. At the Management Committee meeting of the above Unemployed Workers' Centre on February 3 1987 it was agreed that we write to you again repeating this request.

This centre is housed in a community building, mail is left on a table in the entrance hall for all to see and the name of your publication is visible. Our tenure here is on the understanding that we do not engage in what some people see as extreme political behaviour. Until such time as the labour and trade union movement can provide us with independent premises we

must beware of any activities which could be used to remove us from this building.

We trust you will now comply with our request.
Yours faithfully,
Maggie Graves (Secretary).
Thetford UWC

Ian Mahoney replies:

We are of course well aware of the political constraints that Unemployed Workers' Centres operate under. Rather than cut you off totally from news of the Unemployed Workers' Charter and its activities however Maggie, what we will do is from this issue onwards supply your copy in a plain envelope. I hope this is OK.

Very Hard

I have been a socialist all my political life. As with many people though, I have been willing to shelve youthful principles for realistic aims. But my belief that once we have central power we can force policies through a reformed parliament has remained dear to my heart.

Now I am not so sure. How do we make sure that local communities get and keep control over their own lives and environment? This question must be addressed. I feel that to take all the power to the centre leads not only to an increase in class differences, but to violence and discontent amongst the population.

We have also seen a stagnation of art and science going hand in hand with dictatorial central government. This has led me to rethink my position. So how do we reach the compromise between central government controlling the means of production and distribution of wealth with the rights of the local community to decide their own destiny without leading to anarchy? I have not as yet found the answer.

Hugh Elliot
Hertfordshire

Ian Mahoney replies:

In its fight against the capitalist class, the proletariat spontaneously tends towards centralised organisation, for example through a trade union, then through a trade union confederation or indeed, through a democratically centralist Communist Party. After the revolution also, the workers' state must combine grass roots initiative with the centralised direction of society, the difference being that socialism will constantly seek to subordinate more and more of the functions of central government to society as a whole. Communism, a free association of producers, will not have a "central government" or any sort of government at all. This will not mean the atomisation of society into a ragged patchwork of "local communities" each having to wastefully and primitively replicate the production of life within its own little sphere of 'authority'. On the contrary, it will indicate that society has reached that level of material wealth, productive capacity and cultural advancement where the central directive of the state is no longer necessary: in between now and then however, it must remain a feature of all human societies.

Ex-WRPer

As an ex-member of the Workers' Revolutionary Party (WRP) seeking principled communism I am writing to you for two things. First I would like to know where the

Banda group (Communist Forum) stands today - obviously the analysis of Banda's politics by his ex-comrades is less than objective.

Also, on several occasions I have met your comrades, most recently at the Bloody Sunday rally; I have been impressed with the non-sectarian way in which they have discussed with a Trot. Previous Communist Party members I have met with have been openly hostile. I am interested in knowing more about your organisation and perspectives.

Alan Voss
Durham

Nationalist Tactic

I think your attitude to Scottish independence is misguided because of your misinterpretation of the classic Bolshevik line on the national question. Nonetheless, I acknowledge that your position is a principled one and consistent with a common understanding within Marxism-Leninism. I must therefore repudiate Al and Fred Donaldson's ludicrous claims that you reflect the machinations of your own bourgeoisie.

This style of argument is the worst sort of pseudo-dialectical sophistry. Presumably, the Donaldson's support the MNR and South Africa because the British army is training Mozambique troops in Zimbabwe. The objective interests of opposed classes are not necessarily always distinct: the assumption that they are is a bogus basis for pursuing politics and leads to a tortuous tautism.

Dave Douglass Pan-Celtic nationalism is a dreamy piece of utopian romanticism. Celtic culture is a figment of Victorian novelists and has no common connection with the contemporary reality of people in Scotland. Douglass' line is reminiscent of the worst forms Pan-Slavism which the Bolsheviks fought so resolutely.

These problems vanish when support for national independence is seen as a tactic appropriate to specific concrete conjunctures. An independent socialist Scotland is politically feasible now, would enjoy majority support and provide a rock solid basis for British socialism. In the past I have opposed Scottish nationalism and will do so again when conditions change. At present however, the British road to socialism is a *cul-de-sac* and a rainbow alliance of tokenised fragments is no alternative.
Red Rackham
Scotland

Hostile Letters

Congratulations on publishing an entire page of critical or hostile letters in issue 45. What a contrast to the letters pages of other communist journals.

The *Morning Star* prefers to devote its centre pages to non-existent splash features every day rather than risk any serious debate. The few letters tolerated are either completely non-controversial or of the fawning, adulatory type. The occasional pro-EC contribution is inevitably followed by three or four carefully prepared CCG rebuttals.

7 Days' policy of pretending that all is now well in the Party means that its letters pages tend to be dominated by discussion of the most trivial, pathetic nature that it

is almost beyond belief. It seems that no serious opposition to Eurocommunism can be allowed, except for the occasional mildly critical Straight Leftist offering.

There is no short cut to reforging a genuinely revolutionary Communist Party. Complete honesty and opposition to opportunism, coupled with a willingness to engage in ideological debate with all viewpoints are necessary, whatever the short-term cost.

I have arranged a £15 a month standing order to the paper.

Don Peterson
North London

Voting Labour?

With the experience of past Labour governments, the present policies and antics of Kinnock and co., and also with our analysis and attitude to the Labour Party, should we encourage people to vote Labour on just an anti-Tory vote, or should we expose, attack and criticise Labour and also tell people not to vote?

At present, because of past dealings I've had with Labour MPs, my idea is not to vote and tell people my reasons, and also to try to expose the treachery of the Labour Party. Do you agree?

Allan Jenkins
Stirling

Selfish printers and teachers?

You 'Leninists' do not seem to have read *What is to be Done* where Lenin makes it plain that 'deriving' a political significance from strikes does not redeem economic. At least in his time the struggle was against poverty and starvation. Now, when the technological level has wiped out poverty and guaranteed basic material needs, the economic struggle is for the capacity to buy a video toy or a car. It has become stripped of humanitarian meaning.

Taken the printers' strike. Their 'heroism' consists in a determined struggle to win back the privilege of producing scabby anti-communist propaganda for the boss class. They were motivated by nostalgia for that fat pay packet (after all, they cannot get any satisfaction from their work). It was a typical instance of a selfish sectional struggle of a section of the labour aristocracy to regain lost positions. The same can be said of the teachers.

Fraternally
Alexander Clements
Ipswich

Note: Letters have been shortened due to lack of space. For political security we have changed certain names, addresses and details.

WRITE OR RING
If you would like to reply to any of these letters, raise questions or comment on articles in *The Leninist* please write to The Editor, BCM Box 928, London WC1N 3XX. Or phone us on 01-431 3135.

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TEACHERS

AGAINST THE threat of Baker's Teacher's Pay and Conditions legislation, the National Union of Teachers and the National Association of Schoolmasters and Union of Women Teachers

made the joint call for strike action. The union leaders were forced to make this stand by strong rank and file pressure. Certainly, having agreed to a deal which meant a real pay cut in return for worse conditions — in other words a sellout — the NUT leadership found itself facing a growing surge of unofficial action.

The NUT spent some £50,000 plus on propaganda selling the Acas deal to a confused membership. Despite the expensive packaging of the Acas deal as some anti-Baker victory, 42% of NUT members who voted, voted against the deal. The NAS/UWT hallot actually rejected the deal entirely. For the Labour dominated employers' body and the unions, worried as they are about damaging Kinnock's election chances, the Acas deal was a small price to pay to bring back "peace and calm" to the education system after two years of disruption.

Yet, simply because it is a sellout, the Acas deal could not calm the anger of teachers who have seen their real wages fall every year since 1974. Militant teachers did not fall for the fallacious line that the vote to accept the Acas deal was the end of the story. And it soon became clear that the whole deal would collapse as soon as Baker's bill became law. So the teachers' dispute was far from over.

The lead came not from the top but from below. The largest NUT area, Inner-London, staged a very successful unofficial strike on January 13 against both the Acas deal and Baker's bill. Unfortunately, in an attempt to impose the Acas deal, the NUT bureaucracy suspended the members of the Inner London Teachers Association council and its officials.

But the militant rank and file in the NUT was not cowed by the bureaucratic whip. Coventry, Leeds, Rochdale, Ipswich, Croydon and Leicester voted to join Inner-London and other militant teachers in taking further unofficial strike action against the Baker bill on March 5. This forced the NUT bureaucracy into calling its own action and directly encouraged it to unconditionally reinstate the ILTA leaders.

In the past, confrontation with the government, the attempted imposition of a sellout and the willingness of a large militant minority to fight would have provided ideal conditions for the Communist Party to agitate for revolutionary politics and fight for a new leadership. Tragically today opportunism prevents this. In fact the leadership of our Party welcomed and connived at the Acas deal!

Opportunism has led to a situation in recent years where our Party is seen as a prop for the NUT leadership. This has provided a field day for various petty bourgeois Trotskyite groups. Because of this the opportunists have developed a paranoia about the Trots, actually using them as an excuse for lining up with the right and voicing the conservative views of headmasters and the most backward sections. This has been justified by Eurocommunism through its obsession with alliances.

In practice this leads to headlong flight from the militant rank and file. The only member of the ILTA leadership not suspended was June Fisher, a Party member on the NUT executive. Another leading Euro teacher, comrade Marion Darke, was quoted in the January 17 edition of 7 Days as saying the

WHAT PRICE PEACE AND CALM?



Militant teachers forced the NUT leadership to act.

NUT executive might have been "disciplinary" over the ILTA suspensions but the action on January 13 was in effect "ultra-left".

The disgraceful role of the Euros is well known, but what of the other opportunist factions and groupings in and around our communist movement? For all their claims they are not so different. They all pander to the snobbish pretensions of the most 'moderate' elements. Unofficial industrial action is, you see, not for professionals and arguing for it only alienates them and throws them into the arms of Thatcher and the Tories.

To cover their craven capitulation to the NUT bureaucracy's sellout, opportunists, stretching from the most avid readers of *Education for Tomorrow* to the ex-Maoists of the Communist Party of Britain (Marxist-Leninist), said the Acas deal was a "partial victory". Because of this the opportunist groupings refused to back unofficial strike action against the Acas sellout.

Straight Leftism may not be as opportunist as the Euros, but opportunism, like pregnancy, has its stages. And at the end of the day, if things run their course, we all know what will result.

The Straight Leftists have at least one teacher in their top leadership. In spite of this neither their monthly broad labour movement paper *Straight Left*, nor their monthly duplicated samizdat news sheet *Communist*, dealt with the Acas deal.

Why the silence? Quite simply, the Straight Leftists wanted to back the Acas sellout but keep quiet about it, in order not to damage the left facade it is constructing.

What about the *Morning Star*? On the ILTA suspensions, clearly it also thought silence was golden. It refused to state its opinion about the NUT's bureaucratic attack on the rank and file. Of course, on the Acas deal, it came out unashamedly for the attempted sellout.

Reporting the yes vote for the Acas deal, the *Star* proclaimed: NUT snubs Baker.

Interestingly, the liberal bourgeois *Guardian* headlined the same story with a more accurate assessment "NUT poll gives half-hearted yes to deal". Similar, and with typical dishonesty, was the *Star* coverage of the NASUWT vote. Ignoring the vote against the Acas deal, and how this meant the majority of teachers in all unions balloted were against the Acas deal, the *Morning Star* could only report the rejection of Baker's alternative.

But the argument should never have been about Acas vs Baker. No, communists should be concerned wholly about what teachers need, about the fact that they have suffered a substantial cut in their standard of living over the last decade.

Genuine communists do not start with what the government or the local authorities can afford, let alone what would be good for Kinnock, but what teachers need. It should be as simple as that.

Not surprisingly the Acas deal has caused not a few to question their factional masters. Among those suspended over the January 13 action was comrade Sylvia Bolgar, a delegate to ILTA from Camden, who has been a vocal supporter of Straight Leftism. She incurred the wrath of comrade Pat Turnbull, a Straight Leftist grandee, in of all places 7 Days. Turnbull's letter in the February 7 issue did not defend the suspended ILTA leaders, like her comrade Sylvia Bolgar. Instead she patronisingly ticked off rank and file teachers for being "too prejudiced to even find out" what the Acas deal "really represented."

The pro-*Morning Star* grouping also has its troubles. Large numbers of teachers who support the CCG have marched with their feet against the Acas deal and implicitly against the *Morning Star* which backs it. Victor Adereth wrote to the *Star* voicing their anger at the

paper's support for the NUT executive. "Many socialist teachers in the NUT," he wrote, "including many communists, are totally opposed to the agreement because it is, quite simply, a sellout in the classic sense."

Even the Euros are divided. We know of innumerable examples of teachers who support *Marxism Today* voting against the Acas deal and even some who took part in the unofficial strike of January 13. In 7 Days (January 10) comrade Geoff Gay, an unashamed Euro, insisted that the Party's "line of urging teachers to vote for the Acas deal" was "wrong, wrong, wrong!" And while in true Euro fashion he split the fight for public support from militant action, he finished his letter with the admission that industrial action would be "necessary" if teachers were to get a decent deal.

Manifestly, Party members who work among militant teachers, those at the lower end of the salary structure, were against the Acas sellout. Consequently they found themselves alienated from bureaucrats like Fisher, Holloway, Ferguson and Darke, who between them span the range of opportunist tendencies, shades, factions and splits.

As we have said, the teachers' struggle is not over. Baker can be defeated. The will to fight is there. What's needed is a clear communist lead. Genuine communists do not keep silent in the midst of a major class struggle, they do not connive at sellouts, let alone vote against militant action in pursuit of public sympathy. Genuine communists speak openly, they fight for what workers need, not what the system can afford, they know public sympathy comes with strength and a willingness to engage in militant action.

We appeal to all communists who opposed the Acas sellout to break from their factional masters. Join us in reorganising the CPGB.

Tony Coughlin

MARK ASHTON

THE DEATH last month of comrade Mark Ashton from an AIDS related illness came as a great shock to many people in the Communist Party. Although Mark had resigned from his position as general secretary of the Young Communist League in 1986, there was little indication that the comrade was seriously ill until very recently. His sudden death robbed the Communist Party of an enthusiastic comrade, in whose career can be seen the tragedy of the decline and degeneration of Eurocommunism.

Comrade Ashton came into the Party and League with some subjectively good instincts. Drawing on his personal experiences in Portrush in the north of Ireland, Mark initially adopted a relatively healthy line on the struggle for Irish freedom. Understandably, he was thoroughly contemptuous of the YCL's fraternal organisation in Ireland — the Connolly Youth Movement — due to their anti-republican stance and their opposition to the armed struggle. Of course, this and other leftist positions did not win him friends in some quarters of the YCL. Nevertheless, in 1985 he replaced the dull, deeply unpleasant bureaucrat Doug Chalmers (of the Yard) as the League's general secretary. His energy, life and flamboyant humour was a vivid contrast to his morose and police calling predecessor.

Yet despite his verve comrade Ashton could do nothing to reverse the decline of the League. Indeed, by this time, he had fully embraced Eurocommunism. Thus, despite this young comrade's flair, objectively he became part of the problem, not the solution. Mark had come into the YCL around the time of the emergence of a group of Leninists in its ranks but despite his earlier left healthy impulses, Mark was unable to break from opportunism. In fact, the ferocity of the battles inside the YCL drove him all the quicker into the dubious embrace of Eurocommunism.

From then on, Mark's energy was effectively crippled and distorted by the politics he had adopted. The few initiatives that the YCL attempted during his brief secretaryship were unmitigated flops. Who could forget the YCL's 'Tent City' stunt, meant to highlight the problem of youth homelessness, which attracted less than a handful of young people and only one tent? Or the way that YCL National Organiser, comrade Brian Jones, wandered haplessly around a demonstration to mark the anniversary of Bloody Sunday, forlornly looking for someone to hold the other end of the YCL's banner?

We spoke to Mark earlier this year in connection with the Nick Wright scandal. Amongst other things, he gave us some impressions of his time as YCL general secretary. Clearly, in his comments we can see two things: his disillusionment with the frustrating experience of trying to build the League with Euro politics and also that unresolved inner tension between left and right that characterised this comrade's outlook to the very end. He told us that the YCL "has been declining for a long time — at least since the 60s. Certainly, it's fair to say that it has lost any base it had amongst young people ..." We asked the comrade why this should be, surely young people in the 1980s desperately need a revolution-



A good man fallen among Euros.

nary communist youth organisation? Ashton's reply spoke volumes:

"I suppose it's problematic coming to terms with our Stalinist past and making sure not to throw the baby out with the bathwater as it were. We mustn't lose touch with what we are actually after, which I suspect has been the case with some people who have been in the YCL".

So after being general secretary, what did he now think of the YCL?

"I tend to see it as a fairly irrelevant organisation. In my history of being involved with it it was never really a very relevant organisation. In reality it wasn't doing anything, it didn't have a programme of action adapted from *Our Future*. If *Our Future* had been implemented, worked around and looked at, so we could have prioritised our work, then it could have worked. But because of its traditional role within the labour movement, among apprentices, in the trade union organisations, when there were lots of young people in those type of organisations, with the decline of the number of young people working in those type of structures and the growth of the numbers in non-unionised sectors like MacDonalds or whatever and also the widening and diversity of demands that were raised in the 60s, really knocked the YCL off its course.

Its only now in hindsight that we can start to construct a new programme for young people. But then again, things are changing so fast and so quickly that it's hard to pinpoint something and get people mobilised because people are all over the place at the moment ..."

It is instructive that comrade Ashton, the last general secretary of the YCL before it was effectively liquidated, should have been so thoroughly disorientated and disillusioned with his time at the head of the League and in general about communist politics. We have always looked to the YCL as the barometer of the state of the Party:

the confusion of comrades like Mark is indicative of the ideological bankruptcy that grips Eurocommunism.

Frustrated with the League and its inability to provide a channel for his energy, Mark increasingly adopted liquidationist perspectives. He threw himself into work in the broad movement. Yet unlike other Eurocommunist who frequently have a gut reaction distaste for the workers' movement, Mark was often to be seen on the spot at major class battles such as the Miners' Great Strike. The contribution he made to the work of Lesbians and Gays Support the Miners (LGSM), during the Strike was impressive. This organisation for all its severe limitations did more to challenge chauvinist prejudices in the working class in the space of 12 short months than all the consciousness raising sessions or sexuality awareness courses sponsored by his Eurocommunist friends could ever do. It linked the struggle of the oppressed directly to the struggle of the working class. Like the Women Against Pit Closures Movement, it was limited because it was not under disciplined, ideologically correct and clear sighted communist leadership. Nonetheless, for those who wrongly consider that simply being a woman or a homosexual makes one anti-establishment it did show a way forward for the oppressed. The presence of some of Mark's friends from the South Wales mining village of Dulais among the 200 who attended his cremation testifies both to his personality and the impact of that movement that he helped establish and build.

Comrade Ashton was a member of our Party whom we could have won. We mourn the comrade's death because of what he might have done if he lived, we mourn him despite the fact that he was a political opponent and was hostile to Leninism; he lived his life bravely, with the courage of his convictions and with an assertion of life.

The *Morning Star* has been busily trying to create the impression that the circulation of *7 Days* is "hovering at about 1,000" (January 3 etc). Yet the facts are clear. Party centre's figures for issue 48 show that paid subscriptions stand at 1,475 while standing orders from districts and branches are 4,387 (of which maybe 40-50% remain unsold). Not a good record for a Party of just under 10,000 members. So why does the *Morning Star*'s 'Rummager' column feel the need to lie? Obviously it is an attempt to spread doom and despondency about the prospects of reorganising our Party. But it might have something to do with its own plummeting circulation. No audited figures have been produced since 1985. And reports reaching us suggest that domestic circulation has fallen from 14,000 to between 8,000 and 9,000.

While comrades rightly criticise Tony Chater for treating the *Morning Star* as his personal property, comrade Martin Jacques too has managed to create a position where his *Marxism Today* is virtually independent of our CPGB. Disturbingly it is already known as the coffee table magazine of the *City Limits* left. At January's executive committee meeting he came out with the following news: "We need to recognise that *Marxism Today* is not synonymous with the CP ... *Marxism Today* is the theoretical journal of the Communist Party. But 'of' does not mean it is an organ in the policy sense — the Party rather is the sponsor and publisher". Therefore *Marxism Today* "does not belong organisationally or instrumentally to the CP". In other words, we pay for *Marxism Today* but have no control over what goes in it or what it says. We call this liquidationism. How far off is the day when comrade Jacques joins Chater in calling the CPGB "an outside body"?



Has Jacques done a Chater?

The Communist Party's £100,000 appeal will run from February 15 to March 26. At a time when Eurocommunism is imploding and leaders of the pro-*Morning Star* grouping are floating the idea of a split and the formation of an NCP Mark II, it is essential that all members of the Party fight for the success of the national appeal. After all, this looks like being a general election year and without money there will be no communist candidates. That is something we and all genuine pro-Party forces have no wish to see. Those members and Party organisations that are half hearted about working for the appeal play into the hands of the Chaterite splitters. Because of this we urge Party members to work wholeheartedly for the appeal. We will be taking special collections from our paper's supporters and sympathisers. Donations can be sent via *The Leninist* or direct to: Eric Atkinson, Fund Organiser, 16 St John Street, London EC1M 4AY.

After it was over, the *Morning Star* called the Netas strike a "historic victory" (February 21 1987). Yet although the strike lasted three months the *Star* did not once report it. Was this for lack of information? Hardly. No, it was because the *Morning Star*'s Menshevik friends in the official Communist Party of Turkey did not like those who were leading the strike. For those who want to find out what the *Morning Star* did not report, the latest edition of *Turkey Today* is a godsend. It concentrates on trade union questions, not least the Netas strike. After the success of the strike it is clear that the working class in Turkey is set for a major confrontation with the bosses. Netas heralds a strike wave which will shake the system to its very foundations. It is clear that at this crucial juncture maintaining trade union unity is essential. The creation of rival trade union centres would be a serious setback for the working class in Turkey in its struggle to regain its trade union rights and improve its drastically deteriorating conditions. For that reason it is fortunate indeed that *Turkey Today* reprints an article from *Iscinir Sesi* which examines the attempts to split the Turk-Is trade union centre and revive the now defunct militant-class-struggle DISK federation as a domain for social democracy.

APOLOGIES

Let us begin by apologising for the lateness of this issue. We have just gone over to a new method of typesetting. There should now be no problem in getting back to our fortnightly schedule. Another problem has been with our bankers order forms. Those who sent their banks our form will have experienced difficulties. The bank sorting code was incorrect. It is in fact 08-90-33. So please, please, please alter it. Apologies for the inconvenience but you know it is worth it. Time is short and so is our money. As we go to press our £600 monthly fund stands at only £405, or in other words £195 short. This is not disastrous. But on top of a shortfall last month we are accumulating a larger and larger debt with our printers. We need to clear this and clear it quickly.



THE UNEMPLOYED are at the sharp end of capitalism's drift towards a new general crisis. For their benefit the TUC plaintively recalls the yesteryears of economic boom and full employment. But the days of 'you've never had it so good' died long before Lord Stockton was lowered to rest. All the TUC-backed Wilsonian 1970s schemes for getting back to the Supermae 1960s have come to a resounding three million plus on the dole in the Thatcherite 1980s.

Quite simply capitalism has reached its last, final stage: it is now moribund and decadent. It offers the unemployed and the working class as a whole no future because it itself only has a future of decay and crisis. What is needed is a new system.

Far from this galvanising the TUC and the official movement, any optimism it ever had has given way to despair. In office, Labour doubled unemployment; now, in opposition, it can no longer even promise full employment. As the halcyon days of class peace become nothing but a memory and the dark clouds of class war gather, the official labour movement, led by the TUC, runs for the cover of bourgeois realism.

In contrast, the ruling class prepares itself to inflict a strategic defeat on the working class. Although Thatcher says she has beaten the enemy within, the state continues to tool up in the sure knowledge that the miners' Great Strike was only a prelude of what is to come.

Faced with a systematic preparation for class war, has the official movement organised to fight? No. It has almost to a man (and overwhelmingly they are men) sought compromise, retreat and sellout. Anything but make a stand. And when sections of the class have resisted the capitalist offensive, how have our leaders responded? With material aid, solidarity actions and the organisation of a generalised counteroffensive? Again no. What we have seen is hot air in large quantity alongside downright treachery. The miners, print workers, steel workers, train drivers and health workers have all felt the TUC knife in their backs.

So what should the unemployed expect from the existing leadership of the official labour movement? Nothing. In fact no section of the working class has been so monstrously betrayed as the unemployed.

The government has done its best to contain the anger of the unemployed, intimidate and pacify them. Frankly it must be said that in this it has been assisted by the labour movement bureaucracy in general and the TUC in particular. The TUC has collaborated in the notorious slave labour YTS schemes, it has done its best to keep the unemployed unionised and worst of all, calls for organisation of the unemployed have been diverted into tea and sympathy centres.

In the June 1986 edition of the TUC's directory of Centres for the Unemployed over two hundred are listed. True, these centres are potentially a useful base from which an unemployed workers' movement could organise the unemployed on a militant basis. These centres have important facilities which could be put to the service of unemployed workers in the fight for their rights. With this in mind the Unemployed Workers Charter, sponsored by *The Leninist* insists the TUC centres be placed under the democratic control of the unemployed themselves.

Don't organise

In contrast, the *Morning Star* seems to think that linking these centres is equivalent to organising the unemployed. The January 20 edition of Chater's paper carried a feature by Bob Towers, secretary of the Mersyside TUC Unemployed Centres Co-ordinating Committee.

This minor bureaucrat actually argued against the organisation of the unemployed along the lines of the National Unemployed Workers' Movement of the 1920s and 30s. For him the "movement" must be "careful that the unemployed are not organised into holding sections, unemployed unions or other organisations that keep the unemployed away from trade union recognition and involvement." Instead he suggests the TUC's centres should be co-ordinated so as to "tackle unemployment in the most constructive manner possible." Far from this being an aberration, article after article goes to prove this is what Jim Arnison's seemingly militant call in the *Morning Star* to organise the unemployed is coming to.

The UWC and *The Leninist* understand full well that the working class movement must be put onto a war footing. Against the state's

wealth, its laws and traditions, its high tech hardware and ideological poison, we must pit organisation. Not least the organisation of the unemployed as an auxiliary army of the militant working class.

Where the ruling class wants the unemployed to blame foreigners, not the system, for their plight, we will organise internationalist education and solidarity. Where the ruling class uses its regressive Victorian morality to make the victims of capitalist decay feel responsible for their own plight, we will organise a struggle for unemployment benefit to be equivalent to a full wage as a right. Where the ruling class attempts to deploy unemployed workers as blacklegs, we will organise joint actions between the unemployed and those in struggle.

This is fully in accordance with the best traditions of the National Unemployed Workers Movement of the 1920s and 30s. The pro-*Morning Star* grouping has no such politics. It is tied hand and foot to Kinnock, the TUC and Labourism by its commitment to reformism enshrined in the *British Road to Socialism*. It was therefore inevitable that Jim Arnison's *Morning Star* piece, conjuring up the fiery spirit of the NUWM and its CPGB leader Wal Hannington would quickly be subsumed in the wet politics of class collaboration.

In the UWC we regard Wal Hannington's *Unemployed Struggles 1919 - 1936* almost as a bible. On pages 18 and 19 of our edition of this marvellous book there is an inspiring description of how Unemployed Workers Centres were set up in the days when the communist Wal Hannington led things:

"... we raised the demand for suitable meeting-places for the unemployed. The borough councils were to provide premises, and many did so. Where they were reluctant to make such provision the unemployed took matters into their own hands and seized town halls, public libraries, baths and other such buildings. Sometimes the local council authorities accepted this *fait accompli* and allowed the unemployed to hold the halls they had seized. In other cases ... they decided to call in the police to eject the unemployed forcibly. Some bitter fights took place when this happened."

Tea and sympathy

The contrast between this uncompromisingly militant approach that won unemployed workers the right to organise themselves in action centres *unconditionally*, and the weakened, collaborationist approach of the official leaders of our class now, could not be more stark.

Today, the so-called Centres for the Unemployed which the *Morning Star* wants to substitute for a national unemployed workers' movement are, with a few honourable exceptions, sops. They are little more than 'tea and sympathy' centres designed to keep the unemployed off the streets. Apart from that they often provide comfortable living for some aspiring local bureaucrats.

As far as the unemployed are concerned however, the vast majority of centres are just about useless. No wonder the number of users on any one day is often less than the number of staff. Moreover, nine times out of ten those who do use the centres are the most marginalised, most dispirited and most disorientated elements. They are not the stuff militant movements are made of, and well the centre workers know it.

The first Centre for the Unemployed was set up in 1977 as an initiative of the Newcastle Trades Council. The TUC took note of this. It wanted to be seen to be doing something about unemployment but it did not want real action. It wanted a safety valve. The Newcastle centre, gutted of any trace of militancy, became the model.

From a TUC consultative conference in 1980, a hopelessly misnamed Action Programme was put forward which had at its core the idea of TUC Centres for the Unemployed.

But how does Congress House manage to fund its network of 200 plus centres? We asked Ralph Don, the National Development Officer of the TUC:

"Actually, they are funded in the main through local authority funding or through the Manpower Services Commission (MSC) structure. The MSC funds something like 42% of our centres and 34% come through local authority funding ... Under the MSC, there are restrictions placed on what exactly the centres can get involved in.

"Basically, they are supposed to be apolitical. So their task under the MSC structure is how can they help the unemployed in a gen-

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CENTRES ACTION



The unemployed need organisation. The UWC fights to organise the unemployed.

eral way. Obviously, they can't get involved in anything that attacks the government as such. It's a case of 'he who pays the piper calls the tune'."

Exactly. But since 1983, this cosy relationship that Congress House established with the government's MSC has soured a little, as the bureaucrats of the TUC have felt the need to be more up front in their call for a Labour government.

Consequently, the MSC after 1983 refused to fork out any increased funding, although it still remains today the single largest funder of the network. It pumps in some £3 million per year to 88 centres out of the total, employing around 700 people.

Because of this, even the TUC's limp reformist politics and tame campaigning work are ruthlessly excluded from these centres on the pretext that the MSC would withdraw funding if the resources of these organisations were used for political purposes. In effect then, nearly half of these TUC Centres for the

Unemployed are government fronts. With the help of the trade union bureaucracy the unemployed are given tea and ping-pong and kept out of trouble, i.e. kept from fighting the system which causes unemployment.

Mr K on trial

A classic example of what the MSC gets for its money is a Mr Eric Kay, manager of the Carnegie Centre for the Unemployed in Workington. Eric wrote a little while ago to inform us in the UWC that as we "would not be welcome on a TUC or Labour Party organised campaign" we must "keep [our] views away from the Carnegie Centre for the Unemployed".

As pointed out in our reply to Mr Kay, the UWC stands for an uncompromising fight for the interests of unemployed workers. We do this regardless of which government happens to be administering capitalism at any particular time. Because of this, and only because of

FOR N?



this, we are not welcomed by Kinnoch's friends.

This of course represents an indirect challenge to Eric's political position (not to mention his cushy job), and so he took it upon himself to decide what unemployed workers in Workington could and could not read. So he banned all UWC literature. The Carnegie Centre, as you would expect, is MSC funded and so Eric's job actually depends at the end of the day on keeping this body sweet. Eric, despite his self-appointed role as censor to the unemployed of Workington, was at great pains to emphasise what a democrat he was when we spoke to him:

Eric Kay: It's just as well you know now where I stand. I believe in democracy.

The Leninist: But not for the unemployed of Workington, obviously, as you personally decided that they could not read the literature of the UWC.

Eric Kay: No, I'm talking about politically. I believe in the ballot box and the organisa-

tion you represent doesn't believe in the ballot box.

The Leninist: But you didn't have a ballot before you decided to ban the UWC from your centre, did you? So what gives you the right to decide what the unemployed of Workington can and cannot read?

Eric Kay: Oh, no! If they wish to read it they can.

The Leninist: But you've banned it, Eric.

Eric Kay: Well there doesn't seem to be the interest here that there is in other areas in your sort of organisation.

(Or put another way, Eric is not very interested in our type of organisation). Mr Kay went on to equate our group with thieves before explaining what he saw as his centre's *raison d'être*.

Eric Kay: What our aim is is to provide a facility for the unemployed that they can come and use.

The Leninist: What, you're a charity? Don't you think your centre ought to be used for the unemployed to organise themselves in a campaign against unemployment, seeing as you are actually an unemployed workers' centre?

Eric Kay: Well yes. If there was a big demand for that, but there is nobody interested. If a big demand came, we might have to think again.

The Leninist: That's nice to hear, Eric. But haven't you considered the fact that if that 'big demand' came, you would be out of a job?

Eric Kay: That wouldn't bother me. I've always said I'd love to see the day when we are not needed — when everybody is in work.

Shortly after Mr Kay first wrote to us last October, we received a telephone call from someone saying they were involved with the Carnegie Centre. He told us to ignore Kay's demands and carry on sending our literature, assuring us that there were those in the Centre who were in support of our campaign. He also claimed that Eric Kay once said "as long as there are unemployed, we'll have a job."

Tip of the iceberg

The bumbling Mr Kay of Workington is not an extreme example, he is only the tip of the iceberg of censorship. UWC material has been banned by a whole range of bureaucrats around the country. The bulk of centres are strenuously non-political. True, there are a fair number of leftists in these centres who have responded to the message of the UWC, but who are hamstrung by the TUC's collaborationist link up with the government agency, the MSC. Nonetheless there can be no denying the impact of the UWC.

The majority of the mainstream of the movement, like the *Morning Star*, has tried to circumvent the UWC challenge by tinkering with the existing structure. For example, the UWC's propaganda was discussed at the October 31 1986 meeting of the South East Region TUC Centres for the Unemployed Steering Committee.

The meeting reassured itself that "the nature of much of its propaganda would ensure that it got little support from amongst unemployed people." (To be fair, this was before the UWC organised on the Jarrow '86 demonstration the largest contingent and certainly the loudest). "However, it exposed the lack of a national campaign around the question of equipment that could mobilise the unemployed."

It was felt that the UWC should be raised at the South East Regional TUC to highlight the need for more nation-wide action. But what alternative to the UWC was being suggested? A national membership card which could be issued by the local Unemployed Workers Centre, which would make you a member of the TUC national network of centres. This is most likely what the *Morning Star* is looking for. But will the ruling class tremble, will the unemployed respond? Hardly.

In contrast to the UWC's fighting programme of action, all the official movement can offer are tokenistic gestures like this 'membership card' nonsense. When the UWC's campaign for a militant unemployed workers' movement begins to lift off in this country, it will sweep aside those who try to fob us off with such nonsense. Our movement will not bother with legal niceties, let alone TUC respectability; we will simply break the ban on politics imposed by the MSC and their TUC stooges. When the time comes we will claim our centres, for ourselves and make them into the genuine campaigning bodies that a dynamic and growing unemployed workers movement needs. Eric Kay and his ilk — beware!

Paul Pierce (UWC)

JIM CAN'T FIX IT



The UWC says: organise to fight.

BUT THE UWC CAN

JIMMY SAVILE OBE, says he can fix it for the unemployed. This darling of the establishment has launched *Hands Across Britain*. It aims to stage a giant charity-style stunt to "focus attention upon the social, emotional, spiritual and economic effects of unemployment". A 350-600 strong human chain will link London to Liverpool on May 3.

For the Unemployed Workers Charter this will do about as much to bring down unemployment as Savile's attempts to keep the National Health Service running on dogooding.

Savile has signed up other concerned media personalities to do their bit for the unemployed. But as well as Michael Parkinson, Anna Ford and Bob Hoskins HAB is supported by big business. Sir Peter Parker, the former British Rail chairman, will be there on May 3 as will the Manpower Services Commission's Sir Richard O'Brien.

Rail workers will remember Parker as a butcher of jobs; and as to O'Brien, youth who have suffered under the YTS and the MSC's cheap labour schemes have learnt to hate this slave trader.

But so as to include all elements of the establishment, Savile has got Norman Willis and a host of other trade union bureaucrats to sponsor the May 3 binge of crocodile tears. Willis' decision to associate the TUC with this cynical exercise is not surprising. Trade union officialdom prefers charity to confronting the task of actually organising the unemployed.

Our CPGB should step in where the TUC fears to tread. This is what it did in the 1920s when it took the lead in founding the National Unemployed Workers' Movement. Unfortunately today our Party is held back from this task by the grip of opportunism.

Comrade Dave Cook thinks HAB is the best thing since the Peoples' March for Jobs. But what did the Peoples' March do, what will Hands Across Britain do? Nothing. The Peoples' March was about class collaboration. HAB is about the same thing. The unemployed have no interest in further inflating the egos of well heeled TV

personalities, job cutting bosses and back stabbing bureaucrats. HAB cannot fight unemployment.

The unemployed need organisation, not sympathy. The unemployed want to fight, not waste their time holding hands in a futile gesture. Unemployed workers will join the UWC in turning May 3 into a day of militant protest. The UWC call to organise the unemployed will ring forth loud and clear from London to Liverpool.

The UWC already has 200 members after only two months work in 1986. Now it has announced exciting plans for 1987.

A UWC paper will be launched in the near future. Its first aim will be to put the UWC onto a firm organisational footing. Branches will be set up and a major push will be made to draw into its ranks all unemployed workers who really want action.

The UWC understands full well that, whatever the result of the forthcoming general election, the unemployed must organise to fight. A third term of Thatcher will see further attempts to reduce the number claiming the dole by changing the method of counting and even more naked intimidation. But would Kinnoch be any different? The UWC thinks not. Because of this the UWC will be going all out during the general election campaign to ensure unemployed workers do not have any illusions in Kinnoch.

The UWC says:

● Don't rely on the general election changing anything. Vote Labour if you must, but organise to fight whoever is elected. This must be the motto of the unemployed. Labour wants to manage the system which causes unemployment, not abolish it.

● The unemployed must fight for work at full trade union rates. No more slave labour. If the system cannot give us real jobs we demand benefit at the level which provides for a decent living. In other words work or full maintenance.

● Join the UWC. Write to UWC, BCM Box 928, London WC1N 3XX or phone Mark Fischer on (01) 431 3135.

EVER SINCE certain politically heterogeneous opposition groupings within our Communist Party of Great Britain decided to congeal around the *Morning Star* and its right opportunist editor, Tony Chater, we Leninists have argued that such a rotten unprincipled bloc would be unstable and ephemeral. This prediction has not proved unfounded. With the launch of the Communist Campaign Group, quite the reverse. Its crisis has deepened and begun to bear the fruit of disintegration.

This was shown in the debates in the *Star* where CCGer launched him/herself at the throat of fellow CCGer over the issue of Brent Council's attack on headmistress Maureen McGoldrick. Pro-council CCGer spat 'racist' at pro-teacher CCGer (see *The Leninist* 44).

As regards editorial policy, the *Star* did not know which way to jump. So, just to be on the safe side, it teetered gracelessly between the two positions to maintain unity (no, don't laugh) in CCG ranks. Eventually, when the hysteria had subsided somewhat, bold Tony stepped into the breach to dispel any remaining unease among the faithful with three double page articles giving the line on racism, while retreating into a comfortable degree of abstraction by avoiding mentioning Brent completely.

Some may be contented with this coitus interruptus style of debate, secure in the knowledge that orthodoxy and the CCG can be maintained so long as can the dishonest method. But truth will out. The *Star's* indirect approach to the question still points the way to the chauvinist conclusions of its own arguments. So let us take a closer look at these three articles and pursue their logic to its bitter, chauvinist end. In varying degrees the three writers, Chater, John Blevin and Lyn Williams, all nurture a naive faith in the ability of the British state to fight racism. The argument runs as follows. The state can be

three writers that racism is a product of capitalism. "If economic exploitation is identified as the basic cause of oppression, it follows that the solution to all forms of oppression lies in the abolition of class society." (Lyn Williams, December 3 1986) So how is the state, the executive committee of the bourgeoisie as a whole, as Engels defined it, to fight racism? Chater and co. pay lip service to the Marxist conception of racism as a product of capitalism, but then, either foolishly or dishonestly, expect the state machinery to slit its own throat by removing an essential prop of the economic relations on which it rests.

The real reason for the existence of the Race Relations Acts, the Commission for Racial Equality, the multitude of 'anti-racist' quangos etc, is not, as our three wise monkeys seem to think, to fight racism.

For starters, let's take the 1976 Race Relations Act which Blevin seems so keen on. The Act had two precedents, in 1965 and 1968. In 1965 the Home Secretary justified the Act as follows; "Overt acts of discrimination in public places intensely wounding to the feelings of those against whom these acts are practiced... breed the ill will which, as the accumulative result of several such actions over a period, may disturb the peace." This Act was totally useless; anyone who was the object of racial harassment had no direct access to the courts, only through the Race Relations Board, which disallowed the vast majority of such cases.

The second Act in 1968 was as toothless, and was justified along similar lines. Home Secretary Jim Callaghan argued the need for the Act so as to "protect society as a whole against actions which will lead to social disruption."

The 1968 Act was broader in its scope than the previous Act, but with more or less the same convoluted route to the courts along which most were sorted out. Anyhow, whose

face of the growing racist onslaught. And not just from the tiny, fragmentary forces of British fascism or gangs of racist riff raff, but fundamentally from the state itself. That is the true reason for the Race Relations Act, that is what the *Morning Star* supports.

What is clear from the three articles is their clear orientation to winning new and maintaining old reforms, within the framework laid out by the state; eg Blevin's "monitoring systems", "access programmes", "anti-racist and anti-sexist education" not to mention his calls for 'local authorities [to] develop consultative machinery to involve the black community'. All are united in this pious desire to hand down a bigger slice of the cake to their 'black friends', who presumably can't do it for themselves. Tony Chater, John Blevin, Lyn Williams... and Brigadier Frank Kitson, not normally known for his caring disposition, all favour a similar package of reforms, concessions and grants:

"Such a programme should include measures designed to maintain and if possible increase the prosperity of the country, as well as measures aimed at the destruction of the subversive organisations, because not only is prosperity itself a potent weapon in the struggle against those who wish to overthrow the existing order, but also there would be little point in defeating the insurgents only to be left with a ruined community. The programme should also cater for rectifying genuine grievances, especially those which the enemy are exploiting as part of their cause, and for attracting support by implementing popular projects and reforms." Frank Kitson *Law in the Open* (p. 10)

This is most certainly not what Lenin intended when he advanced the United Front slogan, march separately, strike together, but our CCGers wind up cheek by jowl with the Metropolitan Police nevertheless. Such reforms are to prevent real action. However



RACISM

AND THE MORNING STAR

pressured into taking action against racism in society as a whole (Blevin gives an example of this as being the 1976 Race Relations Act. We shall return to this point later.) This is to be achieved, presumably, by a *British Road to Socialism*-type broad democratic alliance and a blurring of the distinction between state power and governmental power within a bourgeois state.

Blevin writing in the *Star* on December 1 1986, sets out a list of vague and therefore meaningless demands, many in the main directed towards the capitalist state and industry; "[job] vacancies can be notified in the black and ethnic press", (how radical, John!); "categories of jobs where there is at the moment a low proportion of black workers can be identified and targeted for action; monitoring systems can be developed (by whom? - SQ) to identify possible areas of discrimination," and so on and so forth. The term meaningless can barely express the practical irrelevance of this list. Just to reassure the good-hearted but cash-strapped capitalists of the all-round benefits of his little scheme, Blevin comforts: "measures to benefit disadvantaged sections can take various forms and do not depend exclusively on increased resources."

Chater too wants the state to chip in to the anti-racist struggle by "strengthening the law against racial incitement." (November 28 1986).

Here we see that the *Morning Star's* anti-racist programme is tied, *British Road* fashion, to the illusion that the capitalist state can be made to take on racism.

This makes nonsense of the claim by all

courts are they? Anybody with great faith in the anti-racist crusading spirit of your average judge will have that faith surely dashed.

But this is a side issue. Callaghan put his finger on the real function of the Race Relations Acts, and that is the preservation of social peace. On racism in society, because society is capitalist and the Act so toothless, it can have no real effect. It exists as a sop, a diversion to pre-empt real anti-racist action. But we digress. It is not the 1968 or 1965 Act that Blevin is so enthusiastic about. Blevin is specific; it is the 1976 Act.

It is true that the powers of the 1976 Act are more comprehensive than the other two. But this must be taken in the context of the situation in which it had been introduced. In 1976 the economy was noticeably on a downward slide, the National Front was on the ascendancy, the anti-racist, and now anti-fascist, fightback was taking on greater and more physical characteristics, black people were more prepared to take the law into their own hands, since it obviously was not in their hands already, and were better organised to do so.

If the Labour government wanted to preserve its much vaunted social peace, much more drastic action was called for. Hence the 1976 Act. In reality it did no more to tackle racism than the previous Acts. It was just that if the government wanted to head off real anti-racist action by the independent organisations of black people and growing numbers of white youth, then the government itself had to make more audible anti-racist noises.

Objectively, the Race Relations Act is reactionary. It aims to disarm black people in the

Kitson is no economist, and he looks for a more prosperous Britain will end on the rocks. He will then resolve this by stepping up state repression. With such forces behind you an ignorance of *Capital* is no doubt not too worrying. But the *Morning Star*, albeit unconsciously, uses the same logic. It will, if followed, lead black people towards greater repression.

Something that is noticeable about Blevin's proposed reforms is that they require the establishment of administrative bodies. British imperialism has for a long period of time also attempted to create and absorb such bodies. Livingstone's quangosism is merely the latest in a long line.

What they do in effect is to create, promote and absorb a stratum of black people on these bodies who, as a consequence, adopt the outlook of their oppressors. They are no longer there to promote the interests of the black communities, but to monitor and control them. It is easier for these black community functionaries to divert black people's anger into bureaucracy, and preferable to confronting them on the street with riot police. This was achieved with some success in the United States after the demise of the 'Black Power' movement.

Again, Kitson has learnt his lessons well, seeing the advantages for the bourgeoisie "to associate as many prominent members of the population, especially those who have been engaged in non-violent action, with the government." (*Ibid*, p.87)

This can be seen in practice in the resistance encountered by black youth in Broadwater Farm by such figures, not least Bernie Grant,

after the summer '85 uprising. This is a case of elsewhere

the peaceful reorganisation of, and control by, a section of the black communities. The *Star* unwittingly in the testimony of Brigadier Kitson, would encourage. And it is this which we must fight tooth and nail if we are ever to get a clear shot at Keynesian-Like.

Our CCGers have a problem in not being able to see the wood for the trees. They look at the odd recompense received by a few black people through the enactment of the Race Relations Act without seeing the diversionary role it plays overall. They applaud the posings of the various committees for this and commissions against that without understanding their objective effects of drawing black people into counterproductive legalistic wranglings behind a stratum of petty bourgeois blacks created for this purpose.

If I may make so bold as to give Chater, Blevin and Williams a much needed elementary lesson in dialectics: we as Marxists must be able to understand as a unity the sum of parts, and also understand the reverse effect that the whole has on each of its parts. Chater and Co. take a superficial look at the Race Relations Act, various reforms and committees, without seeing them as they relate to the body within which they are subsumed - the bourgeois state.

The same state which instituted the Race Relations Act carries out immigration raids on the homes and workplaces of black workers, continually harasses black people through its police force, crippled Cherry Groce and murdered Cynthia Jarrett and then freed the scum in blue that did it. This state passes its anti-racist acts for a purpose. It allows and even promotes the various quangos for the same purpose.

For all their anti-capitalist posing (even the congenital rightist Chater's article was titled *Racism - as old as capitalism*) these CCGers fall back on the racist capitalist state to fight



racism. This is like promoting Denis Nilsen as a restaurateur.

The lack of embarrassment with which the *Star* slides into such a position rests on its whole reformist *British Road to Socialism* logic. For the *Star*, it is no longer a case of the working class needing to smash the old state, it need now only occupy its machinery, whereupon it can be transformed. This revision of Marx and Lenin is not new by any means. It, like racism, is as old as capitalism.

"Where political parties exist [and we can include here, opportunist blocs - SQ], each party sees the root of every evil in the fact that instead of itself an opposing party stands at the helm of the state. Even radical and revolutionary politicians seek the root of evil not in the essential nature of the state, but in a definite state form, which they wish to replace with a different state form." (Karl Marx, Marx and Engels CW, Vol 3, p197)

The CCG should have the honesty to admit that their reformist utopias of community policing, anti-racist acts etc, are totally at variance with Marxism-Leninism, and drop the term communist from their title.

Anti-racist' Immigration Laws

Strictly speaking this question belongs in the above section. But the *Star's* position is so outrageous that it warrants a separate heading. For Chater, anti-racism "means purging the immigration laws of racism." It would be like purging a virus of its ability to cause disease; you just would not have anything left. By their very definition the immigration laws are racist. Even if you were to reform away the distinction between black and white workers, the distinction between British and non-British citizens would still remain. Or would Chater also exclude returning happy holiday-makers on their way back from the Costa Brava? Chater's position is untenable

and ridiculous. Its conclusions are racist.

The only demand for communists to advance in relation to the inherently racist immigration laws is that they should all be smashed. No immigration laws. A worker, whatever his/her nationality, has a right to sell his/her labour power unhindered by capitalism's racist laws.

Chater starts from the chauvinist premise that British jobs can only be protected at the expense of migrant labour and foreign imports. It is the same premise as the Tories and fascists, who have the advantage of being able to pursue such logic through to the end. Chater can only wring his hands and plead for 'nicer' immigration controls. The starting point for genuine communists must be that jobs can only be achieved at the expense of the bosses, not fellow workers.

"On the question of emigration and immigration, a clear difference of opinion arose between the opportunists and the revolutionaries in the Commission of the Stuttgart Congress. The opportunists cherished the idea of limiting the right of migration of backward, undeveloped workers - especially the Japanese and the Chinese. In the minds of these opportunists the spirit of narrow craft isolation, of trade union exclusiveness, outweighed the consciousness of socialist tasks: work of educating and organising those strata of the proletariat which have not yet been drawn into the labour movement." (VI Lenin, CW Vol 13)

The position of Chater and the *Morning Star* reinforces sectionalism and chauvinism in the working class and can as much combat racism as a bucket of petrol can put out a fire. The position of Lenin and *The Leninist* is the only way workers' unity against racism can be achieved.

Crumbs of the spoils

"Racism", writes Chater, "backed up by its host of prejudices, continued to serve as

justification, and infected many workers in the imperialist countries as the capitalists tried to pacify them with a few crumbs of the spoils."

Blevin continues: "Imperialism has created the conditions for sections of the working class to collude in the third-class economic status assigned to black people." Wonderful! A scrap of orthodoxy at last. But then Blevin puts his foot in his mouth by continuing: "It now requires the Labour Party and the trade unions, the mass organisations of the working class, to lead anti-racist activity in order to overcome past discriminatory practices and to prove that the movement can attract the black community to its ranks."

The *Star* talks of a bribed stratum of the working class, won to racist bourgeois ideas, and then addresses the task of defeating racism in the movement to this stratum - the Labour Party and trade union leaderships - and it is undoubtedly the leadership which the *Star* is addressing. Black workers, in reality proportionally more unionised than white workers, are left out, merely Uncle Toms to be attracted by the Neil Kinnocks and Norman Willis of this world. It is certainly not them whom the *Star* wants to talk to.

As regards the Labour Party, Lenin over seventy years ago branded it as "thoroughly bourgeois". He was quite clear: fundamentally it was not the mass party of the working class, but one which existed "to systematically dupe the workers." (Both quotes from CW Vol 31, p257-8) The Labour Party was formed from those elements of the working class that had been bribed by the "crumbs of the spoils" of Britain's world plunder, the labour bureaucracy and aristocracy, and held dear the racist and chauvinist ideology that went with this privileged position. The Labour Party was a political expression of this chauvinist stratum of the working class.

How did Lenin advocate dealing with such a party?

"The fact is that 'bourgeois labour parties', as a political phenomenon, have already been formed in all the foremost capitalist countries, and that unless determined and relentless struggle is waged all along the line against parties - or groups, trends, etc, it is all the same - there can be no question of a struggle against imperialism, or of Marxism, or of a socialist labour movement." (*Imperialism and the split in socialism*). Instead of abiding by Lenin's behest, the CCG dives right into the swamp of Labourism and appeals for the chauvinist Labour Party to take the lead in fighting racism. Some hope! The Labour Party has not improved since Lenin's time, but proved itself again and again to be irrevocably committed to the interests of British imperialism, and willing to carry out acts of racial oppression necessary for it.

The Labour government's white paper on immigration in 1965 proscribed entry of unskilled migrant workers and gave the Home Secretary the power to deport black people without going through the courts.

In 1968 the Labour government passed the Commonwealth Immigration Act which restricted entry to people with one grandparent or more already residing in Britain. In 1977 it introduced a probationary period of one year on the marriages of immigrant husbands.

Throughout this time the Labour Party when in power has carried out consistent racial harassment of black people: through parliament, the courts, social security, police and so on. Will a future Labour government be any different? Surely no one could think such a thing. Certainly, the Labour Party in opposition, when it is supposed to be radical, has made no attempt whatsoever to oppose the Tories' racist rule. And yet Chater, Blevin and Williams want to hand the reins to them.

It must be understood that the Labour Party has a stake in capitalism and will not break its bond with it. And despite what the *Star* seems to think, capitalism cannot break with racism. Neither then can the Labour Party. This presents a problem for the CCG because of its loyalty to the Labour Party. That is its problem. *The Leninist* is not a guidance counsellor for the politically astray. We expose the chauvinist politics of the CCG to ensure that it leads as few as possible down its road to nowhere.

Economics

So far Lyn Williams has got off lightly, more or less with guilt by association. But Williams commits a sin on a par with anything that Chater and Blevin have written - economism, the worship of the existing organisations, and the spontaneity of the proletariat. Williams writes: "It is important to see the trade

unions as playing the central role not only in fighting against class exploitation, but also in the fight against all forms of oppression.

"The trade unions, more than any other form of association, can provide the organisational means for creating unity between all sections of the working people.

"The trade union movement has the power and mass base enabling it to play the key and central role in challenging the capitalist class." (my emphasis - SQ)

Williams is dangerously off the mark. We have already outlined that trade unionism out of necessity creates a bureaucracy, and that this bureaucracy out of material interest adopts the ideology of the bourgeoisie, thus providing the social basis of the "bourgeois labour party", as Engels originally described it.

The bourgeoisie, however, demands recompense for the privileges it bestows on the trade union bureaucracy. Part of this recompense is to fall in behind the chauvinist laws and necessities of capitalism. When the bosses say jump, they jump - or else. Both Scargill and Hammond have found this out, one to his cost, the other to his advantage. The trade unions, because they mediate between capital and labour, cannot, as Williams believes, "play the key role in challenging the capitalist class." Especially so, considering their domination by the bourgeoisified labour bureaucracy. Lenin reached this understanding long ago: "There can be no talk of an independent ideology formulated by the workers themselves in the course of their movement." (*What is to be done?* CW Vol 5, p382)

and:

"All worship of the spontaneity of the working class, all belittling the role of conscious social democracy means, quite irrespective of whether he who belittles that role desires it or not, a strengthening of the influence of bourgeois ideology amongst the workers." (*Ibid* p384)

Even in 1902, before he had formulated the theory that a pro-bourgeois labour bureaucracy existed in all the imperialist countries, Lenin already understood the insufficiencies of the existing organisations of the proletariat. Over eighty years on Williams carries on as if *What is to be done?* had never been written.

Workers unity

Chater ends his article with the statement which no socialist would disagree with that: "the struggle for justice and equality for black people concerns us all... Above all it means the unity of white workers and black workers." Yet how does he propose to achieve such unity? By relying on the bourgeois state or pro-imperialist labour bureaucracy to deliver the goods? No chance.

Lenin had other ideas:

"Unity cannot be brought about by a decision, say, of a meeting of representatives; it must be worked for. In the first place, it is necessary to work for solid ideological unity which should eliminate discordance and confusion..."

"This ideological unity must be consolidated by a Party programme... Before we can unite, and in order that we may unite, we must first of all draw firm and definite lines of demarcation, otherwise our unity will be fictitious" (Lenin, *Declaration of the Editorial Board of Iskra*, CW Vol 4, p354)

Unlike Lenin, who sought unity around revolutionary principles, the *Morning Star* and its adjunct the CCG are after a frantic copulation with Labourism in a desperate search for relevance and influence in the workers movement. But the further they go towards this the more they lose any relevance they have. They will either disintegrate under the pressures of Labourism or be engulfed by it.

The only true way to workers' unity around anti-racist policies is the fight to win the class to a revolutionary standpoint, and this entails an unstinting fight against the Labour Party and their lickspittles in the leadership of the Communist Campaign Group.

It necessitates anti-capitalist united front work for workers defence against the racists.

Above all, it demands the reorganising of a revolutionary Communist Party to fight resolutely for our class and all the oppressed. The CCG is a block to this, and any principled individuals within it would be best advised to leave it and let it sink into the mire of its own filthy, chauvinist, opportunism.

Those comrades with a real desire to rebuild a genuinely effective anti-racist, anti-imperialist Communist Party know where to find us.

Sean Quinn



Birmingham Six

Chris Mullin, *Error of Judgement, the truth about the Birmingham bombings*. Chatto and Windus, pp270, £10.95

THIS IS one book review that I hope is well out of date by the time you read it. Mullin's book, along with a *World In Action* programme, publicises the framing – Mullin diplomatically calls it an error – of six Irish men living in Britain, for the Birmingham pub bombings twelve years ago. Because of the pressure brought to bear on the government, in part by this book, the case of the jailing of Hugh Callaghan, Patrick Hill, Gerry Hunter, Richard McKenny, Billy Power and Johnny Walker is up for review.

With the original evidence recapitulated in the book, let alone the additional evidence and interviews with IRA volunteers who claim to have carried out the action in Birmingham, it is quite clear that the six men inside are completely innocent.

Both the book and the fact that the case is up for review damns what is sardonically called 'British justice'. The only evidence ever produced against them is a now discredited forensic test and four confessions which were literally tortured out of them during their time in police custody.

When the case came to court in 1975 the verdict was a foregone conclusion, with a judge who from the start quite clearly thought they should swing and a jury who had been swept along in the wake of anti-Irish chauvinism. This should not be underestimated. After the bombings there was a mass walk-out of workers at Longbridge British Leyland, who marched carrying "Hang IRA Bombers" placards, and there were many violent attacks on Irish people in Britain. This accounts for the British workers movement, in true style, not defending the six men, and for their subsequent 12 years in prison.

It was not, as the book's title indicates, an error of judgement. If it is this obvious today that the men are innocent, then it can have been no less so to those investigating and trying them. What the British bourgeoisie needed after the bombings, and with a five-year old war in the Six Counties, was a scapegoat to provide a focus for the waves of anti-Irish chauvinism they had whipped up. More than this, in criminalising the Birmingham Six the British bourgeoisie were criminalising the whole of the Irish people, in justification of Britain's occupation and oppression of their country. It must be said that twelve years later, with the men still in prison, they have so far succeeded with precious little opposition.

But in re-opening this case, Home Secretary Douglas Hurd and the rest of the bourgeoisie have to fight like hell to squeeze down the lid of a whole Pandora's box of troubles which has been prised open by Mullin's disclosures. The re-trying of the Bir-

mingham Six poses the question; what about the Guildford Four? And from there to the treatment of Irish prisoners and even to Britain's presence in Ireland.

Hurd is determined not to let the situation slip any further from the control of him and his class. Already he has refused to re-open the case of the Guildford Four. He is well aware of the dangers that beckon if he does. Apart from the innocence of those concerned, crisis for Hurd and his class is grist to our mill. We must push him further, expose his hypocrisy and Britain's injustice – not only against the Birmingham Six and the Guildford Four, but against the entire Irish people.

Fortunately for Hurd, he has his own fifth column working within the ranks of the British workers movement. Not only was no cry raised at the jailing of the men originally, little enough has been done for them today. Chris Mullin and the *World in Action* team by no stretch of the imagination constitute a mass working class movement. For all Mullin's valuable work they are no substitute.

That movement still remains to be built. It must be built not only to free those who have been imprisoned unjustly. Mullin's main concern is that the men are innocent – for him the bombings were still simply murder. This cannot be the view of communists and anti-imperialists.

Yes, the Birmingham Six are a special case. They had no connection with the bombings. But if we are to build any movement to free them and others that have been framed we must understand why they are a case at all. These men are in jail, not because they just happened to be in the wrong place at the wrong time and a few coppers were heavyhanded, but because they are Irish, and therefore, in the eyes of British justice, criminals. They are in prison in Britain because Britain is in Ireland. That is also why the republican movement is fighting Britain, and is forced to fight Britain.

It is correct to campaign on the basis of the Birmingham Six's innocence, but we must not fall into the trap of accepting British imperialism's criterion of guilt or innocence. It is no crime to be guilty of fighting British imperialism. IRA bombings are not crimes, but acts of war. It is a war which we must take sides in, and take sides with Ireland.

Hurd understands well the danger of the links between the Birmingham Six and imprisoned Irish freedom fighters of the IRA and INLA being exposed. Those links are the chains of Irish oppression by Britain. We must fight to expose and then break these chains.

The struggle and oppression of the Irish people demands the solidarity of the British working class.

Alan Merrik

Labour must still wait

Gerry Adams, *The Politics of Irish Freedom*, Brandon, pp176, £3.95

WHILE THIS book only professes to be Adams' personal view of the strategy of the republican movement, his position as president of Sinn Féin and a prime force behind the changes undergone by this movement in the 1980s cannot but effect a statement of the politics of the dominant trend in revolutionary republicanism today.

Adams charts the development

of the republican movement, and his involvement in it, from the failure of the border campaign in the 1950s, through the reassessment of republican strategy in the '60s, the 1970 split, and the transition of Provisional Sinn Féin from a "poorly organised support group for the IRA," to its position today as a developed, well established political party, achieved largely under the guidance of Adams and his co-thinkers.

He outlines "three tendencies within the republican movement: a militaristic and fairly apolitical tendency, a revolutionary tendency, and a constitutional tendency". (pp7-8) Justifiably, Adams places himself and Sinn Féin in the revolutionary camp. We shall return to this later.

The constitutionalists and their allies come in for a mauling early on, unsurprisingly, since this is the tendency Adams cut his political teeth on when the movement split in 1970: 'The leadership maintained that following the democratisation of the state there could be a coming together of Protestant and Catholic workers in support of progressive politics and the way to achieve this was through a heavy involvement of republicans in the trade unions. Having accepted the desirability of finding common, neutral ground on which Catholic and Protestant could combine, the trade union movement was, on the British Communist Party model, identified as the organisation in which we should be involved and which provided that mutual ground.' (p14) Although Adams angles the above passage as an implicit justification of the limited nature of the Provisionals involvement in trade union struggles, he is in essence correct when he goes on to argue the pitfalls in the constitutionalists strategy. That is, the sectarian nature of the northern statelet effectively divides the working class through buying off the Protestant workers. The officials, ignoring this, embarked on a reformist solution, whereas the Provisionals defended an essentially revolutionary strategy, whatever its limitations.

Since then there have been 17 years of war in the Six Counties and 17 years of development of and resistance by the Provisionals, while the Officials have been reduced to a pro-imperialist social democratic rump.

Sinn Féin has developed, but this development has not been free of contradictions. The IRA has tightened up its organisation and dug deep roots among the nationalist people in the Six Counties. Under the Adams, McGuinness, Morrison leadership Sinn Féin has taken a left turn, made successful challenges to all parties, north and south, at the polls, proving it is a force to be reckoned with, firmly set its sights on establishing itself in the Thirty-two Counties and correctly assessed abstentionism as a tactic and not a principle, which it has accordingly decided to drop.

"We cannot hope to build a Thirty-two County alternative if we do not build a Thirty-two county struggle" argues Adams, and the present tactics of Sinn Féin have been developed to this end.

From the communist point of view the book certainly has its strong points. Adams and Sinn Féin come over as resolute anti-imperialists and national revolutionaries. If we are to be honest though, it also has its weaknesses. Adams describes his beliefs as "socialist republican", but what he essentially propounds is far from consistent with respect to this label. For instance, Adams says "we are the only party in Ireland that has by right a quarter of the

places on the Ard Chomhairle [leadership] reserved for women. We have also taken measures to overcome and avoid typecasting or stereotyping of women in the party". (p161) Now, while this is no doubt true and not to be derided, it is in sharp contradiction to the position decided on at last year's Ard Fheis and backed by the Adams leadership to oppose women's right to abortion except for medical reasons. The struggle for Irish freedom can only be weakened by Sinn Féin's failure to champion women's freedom.

This is symptomatic of the current political standpoint of the republican movement. When Adams comes to talk of socialism the inconsistencies of his standpoint are brought out in sharp relief: "Real national independence is the pre-requisite of socialism. My understanding of socialism is that it is a definite form of society in which the main means of production, distribution and exchange are socially owned and controlled and in which production is based on human need rather than private profit. Socialism is based on the most thorough-going democratisation of the economic system, politics and public affairs." (p128)

When Adams says that social emancipation must be preceded by national he is correct, although it is unclear in the above formulation whether one follows the other uninterrupted or through a process of stages. The real problem with Adams' conception of an Irish socialist republic is that the working class does not enter into it. The defining feature of socialism is that it is a transitional stage towards communism. The tasks of socialism can only be achieved under the dictatorship of the proletariat, through a revolution led by the proletariat. Sinn Féin does not fulfil the role of a communist party, nor does it claim to. It is a coalition of class forces organised for Irish national liberation.

The socialist content of its politics – and it undeniably has a degree of this – is symptomatic of a growing proletarian component in the ranks of Sinn Féin, although at the moment expressed unclearly and through the medium of a leadership whose politics are essentially petty bourgeois. This is to be expected, given its origins. Nothing emerges fully formed, and a protracted ideological struggle will be necessary for consistent proletarian politics to emerge and assert themselves in the republican movement.

Adams is correct, but within limitations, when he talks of three tendencies within the republican movement. Categories are not fixed entities, but in constant transition. De Valera and Goulding were both representatives of the revolutionary trend in their time. But they based themselves on the contradictory ideology of the petty-bourgeoisie, liable to be pulled this way and that according to the relative strength of class forces. Adams' position is intransigent on the liberation struggle, and this is to be praised. But what of the many other issues? They are indicative of the contradictory nature of Irish republicanism. *The Politics of Irish Freedom* in essence places Connolly as the inheritor of the traditions of Tone, Lalor and other past fighters for Irish liberation. But if we are to be honest we must claim Connolly for a different tradition: that of the revolutionary trend in the Second International. In reality it was Connolly's co-leader in the Easter Rising, Padraig Pearse the revolutionary romanticist, who had the best claim on Tone's mantle.

It would be monstrous for us to make a condition of our support

for the republican movement that it be Marxist, as in effect do many on the British left. We do and always will unconditionally support the liberation struggle. But in the last analysis Ireland has a choice between bourgeois leadership and continued subjugation to imperial Britain, or proletarian leadership giving social as well as national liberation.

For all its strengths, *The Politics of Irish Freedom* does not give this lead.

Alan Merrik

Playing to win

Howard Goorney and Ewan MacColl (Eds.), *Agit-prop to Theatre Workshop: political playscripts 1930-50*, Manchester University Press, pp205, £21.50

THIS collection is to be welcomed primarily because it illuminates the attempts in and around the CPGB of the twenties and thirties to forge a working class theatre movement as a revolutionary weapon. Goorney states that 1928 marked the first beginnings in Britain of "left wing theatre on a comparatively widespread scale". (p199) It was directly agitational, rejecting completely the theatrical conventions of the time, embracing the class struggle and identifying closely with the CPGB.

Another reason for welcoming the publication of this book is that the Workers Theatre Movement (WTM) has been almost completely ignored in mainstream writing on theatre history. Goorney goes through various drama surveys and dictionaries and encyclopaedias of the theatre to show what scant attention has been paid to the first organised political theatre in this country. One more example of bourgeois censorship of our history.

He expresses surprise that even a radical playwright like David Edgar took 1968 to be the starting date of political theatre in Britain. (Now that Edgar is on the editorial board of *Marxism Today*, will he continue to ignore the history of working class attempts to use culture for revolutionary purposes?) Goorney makes much of this ignorance about the WTM and says that his original intention was to help fill the gap by collecting and editing material used by left-wing theatre groups of the period. But he soon discovered that very little had survived and no written record of the early agit-prop sketches could be traced.

It is therefore strange that he fails to mention, except vaguely and indirectly, the extensive scripts, documents and narratives making up *Theatre of the Left 1880-1935*, *WTM in Britain and America* published in the History Workshop series in 1985. This is all the more surprising as Goorney's co-editor, Ewan MacColl, is listed as an author of *Theatre of the Left*. In fact MacColl's introduction, entitled "The evolution of a revolutionary theatre style", covers pretty much the same ground as his narrative in *Theatre of the Left*, describing his life in Salford in the twenties and how the stylistic ideas came about which went into Theatre Workshop's efforts to create a revolutionary working class theatre.

What Raphael Samuels, the main editor of *Theatre of the Left* describes as "Ewan's terrifying mental efficiency" enables MacColl to conjure up a vivid picture of his youth and his increasing pol-

itical activity. His memories of his insatiable reading habits are particularly vivid. He describes his father as one of those working class militants who believed that books were a weapon in the armoury of the class struggle and "though he, himself was not a great reader, he was determined that I should be given the opportunity of becoming one". (pXVI) So his father picked up second hand books for him, the first being Darwin's *The Descent of Man*. MacColl was eight at the time! By the time he was fifteen he'd read, amongst many others, everything that Gogol and Gorky had written and all fifty-two volumes of Balzac's *The Human Comedy*. This made MacColl ideal material for the WTM.

By 1930 WTM theatre groups like MacColl's Red Megaphones were flourishing in all the major cities, performing sketches in the agit-prop style, satirising capitalist exploitation with the kind of satirical political humour that had delighted Elizabethan audiences — the kind of thing, in short, that "college educated comics would be performing on television forty years later". (pXXI)

The groups performed wherever the working class gathered — city squares, factory gates, political meetings and unemployed demonstrations. In fact, MacColl states, their most sympathetic audiences were drawn from the ranks of the unemployed organised in the National Unemployed Workers' Movement. The period of the Third National Hunger March — the largest ever mobilisation of the unemployed — was also the high point in the WTM.

Its emphasis on class struggle and revolution made the WTM an inevitable casualty of the shift to the right in communist politics after 1935. True, prior to this it had been blowing as much revolutionary hot air as the best of them during the pseudo left Third Period, but the right shift caused rapid decline and The New Theatre (as it changed its name to, in line with general class collaboration) fizzled out in 1938.

MacColl, joined by Joan Littlewood in the Theatre Union, had already moved away from the WTM and, indeed, from the Party. MacColl gives different versions of the split in the two books and Goorney gives yet another in his earlier book *The Theatre Workshop Story*. Whatever the facts are, the move away from the Party led to the inevitable contradiction between the calls for the working class to unite and overthrow their oppressors and the group's own inability to work with the only organisation capable of leading that struggle. MacColl could not offer an alternative.

Anyway, they still seemed to follow the Party line. In 1936 they moved from a manifesto of "performing plays which express the life and struggle of the workers...the class upon which the prevention of war and the defeat of reaction solely depends" (*Theatre Workshop Story*, p11) to one of expressing "all that is vital in the repertoire of the world's theatre...to the broadest possible mass of people in the Manchester district" and much about peace, progress and forces of democracy.

But it is clear from MacColl's narrative and indeed the scripts themselves that Theatre Union and, after the war, Theatre Workshop went far beyond just issuing manifestos. In fact, the extraordinary range of objectives that it set itself and followed through is what remains unique about this theatre company. They put great emphasis on improving their skills as performers, working their voices and

bodies into flexible instruments and combining Stanislavski's method of living the role with classical Italian comedy techniques.

In the *Theatre Workshop Story* one of the actresses shows how they united theory with practice: "Alongside the practical work, we studied the periods of popular theatre and their dramaturgy — the Greeks, Moliere, the Elizabethans, the Spanish theatre of Cervantes — trying to find out what they had in common that had appealed to ordinary people and which might provide some basis for our own work in the theatre." They discovered they all had a progressive approach to topical themes in their plays, that they attempted to mould common speech into a lively poetical form and that there is also evidence of a high level of literary and acting skills. So, from the beginning they tried to give their own work some kind of historical perspective, and by "also studying present day theatre in America and the Soviet Union we were able to learn from what was best in the theatre of our own time". (*Theatre Workshop Story* p21)

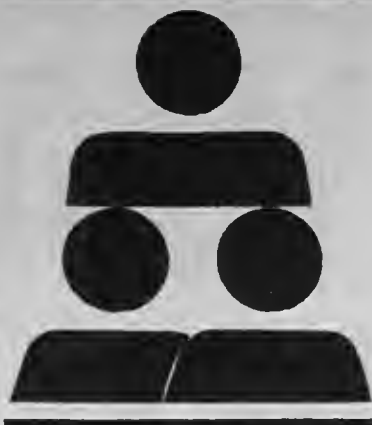
As for the plays themselves, it is of course difficult to judge pieces that have been written to be performed, but they do very clearly show the progression from the early agit-prop days, although even the earliest piece here, *John Bullion*, described as a "ballet with words" and depicting the profit motive behind the war drive, is a highly choreographed piece directed very thoroughly by Joan Littlewood. Of those written by MacColl himself, the first, *Johnny Noble*, (1945), is perhaps the most successful. A light, fast moving "Episodic play with singing", it tells the story of a young merchant seaman against the background of 1930s unemployment, the Spanish Civil War and the war years. The dialogue is poetic, movie-like and resonates with many working class dialects.

The stylistic links with their previous work is always clear. Incidents and scenes from earlier sketches were refined and "stripped of all that was superfluous" in much the same way that the text of a traditional ballad is "stripped down by passing through the mouths of generations of singers".

In the later plays, MacColl moves closer and closer towards Expressionism. This form was at the centre of the debates about culture taking place in the world communist movement in the twenties and thirties — debates that still remain to be resolved. We will look at some of the conflicting viewpoints in the review of another recent book on the Workers' Theatre Movements of the Soviet Union, Germany and Britain, *Theatre as a Weapon*, where we will try to dig a little deeper than comrade Harry Landis' review in *7 Days* where the main concern seemed to be whether or not Alfie Bass had betrayed the working class.

While we communists fight anti-working class and anti-revolutionary ideology we cannot support any one form of theatre. Nonetheless our comrades in the arts must be guided by Marxism-Leninism. We must develop a theatre as a counterpoise to bourgeois morals, the bourgeois media and the narrow pursuit of gain. We will bring to life in the most complete and integral form the WTM ideas of building a revolutionary workers' theatre. It will be a powerful weapon in reforging our CPGB and a powerful weapon in the working class struggle for state power.

Gavin Kyle



In Action or inaction?

Anti-Apartheid AGM, January 10 – 11 1987

THIS YEAR'S Anti-Apartheid Movement (AAM) AGM on January 10-11 was a case study in bureaucratic manipulation, hot air and crass apologism for a year of indolence by the movement's leadership. The first day got off to a flying start when a substantial proportion of the members and delegates chose to reject the report of the standing orders committee. The chair, Labour MP Bob Hughes, decided that they (mainly the expelled City of London AA Group) were in the minority and began to move on to the next item on the agenda.

Many, quite correctly and constitutionally, wanted a vote count to verify this. Hughes persistently refused and, as the issue drew on, refused to recognise a challenge to his chairmanship as well. This opened up a whole Pandora's Box of troubles. City Group refused to let Hughes off the hook until the vote was taken, and halted the meeting by shouting down the next speaker giving the political report.

Hughes then called in the stewards, mainly comprising of *Proletarian* and Straight Leftist rent-a-thug boys, to clear the hall and only allow back in those who accepted the chair's ruling. City Group and many others sat tight, refusing to move until the vote was taken. Hughes and the rest of the platform were forced to negotiate or call the police. (*Proletarian* and Straight Leftists alike having no guts for a real confrontation), and conceded by allowing the vote count. Those outside the hall then re-entered.

Such an early conflagration had the desired effect of driving many 'waverers' to the side of the platform against the 'disruptive' City Group, who were, after all, simply upholding their constitutional rights. The vote was lost by 190 to 410, the official majority of 410 being a very dubious figure indeed.

From this point onwards any real debate went out of the window, with the false polarisation established between those for and those against City Group and its core in the Revolutionary Communist Group (RCG). This only serves to show how the petty bureaucratic paranoia of the present AAM leaders diverts attention from the real issues.

City Group and the RCG merely wanted to push the AAM down the road of radical petty bourgeois protest politics, a la Non-Stop Picket, and towards having a more democratic movement. The AAM leadership shrink back in horror at the thought of being forced into doing anything more adventurous than the occasional pop concert, especially when it might bring in forces who could possibly sweep them aside. And making waves for Neil Kinnock in what may well prove to be election year is definitely out of order.

Already, the Kinnock lovers have got away with murder. Bob Hughes and Straight Leftist Brian Filling consciously scabbed on the Commonwealth Games boycott. When the AGM voted down a resolution calling for their resignations they were vindicated. The AAM has not attacked Kinnock for his support for maintaining diplomatic relations with the racist apartheid regime. The AAM leaders have mortgaged the movement for a mess of worthless Labourite pottage. Even if Kinnock were to become prime minister the reality of Britain's defence of apartheid would not change in essence.

To ensure that Kinnock's boat is not rocked, certain changes have been made to the constitution of the movement, including the introduction of a delegate structure for future AGMs. We are not opposed to such reforms in principle, but one has to evaluate such moves in the overall situation in which they are advanced. The new delegate structure is not so much for fairer representation but for stage management. It is a cynical move to squeeze out opposition to the 'official line' of subordination of AAM activity to the election of 'the next Labour government'.

As we have indicated, we defend City Group, not because we agree with its political orientation — we most certainly do not — but because we refuse to make the movement the personal property of the Ron Todds of the world.

The real question though, is one that neither City Group nor the RCG have taken up and that is, which class should the AAM base itself on? There is a straight choice, bishops or brickies, bourgeois or proletarian politics? At the moment, very much like CND, the AAM has found itself a niche comfortably within bourgeois politics. This has to be challenged if we are to provide effective solidarity to the South African liberation movement and masses. And the way to do this is to fight for workers' sanctions.

There were a few motions submitted to the AGM this year inclined this way, especially directed at the shopworkers and distributors trade unions. In the main they were carried. Those expecting action on this by the leadership should not hold their breath. Resolutions to the same effect were passed at the previous AGM in December 1985.

Nothing has been done to implement them; not from Mandela Street, at least. There has been much hailing and congratulating of the Dunnes Store strikers, yet the AAM leaders have done nothing to organise a speaking tour for them. Ditto a Sactu speaking tour to British trade unions.

Where workers' action has taken place it has been through the activity of individual Anti-Apartheid militants and at best through local groups. The AAM has done nothing to coordinate and encourage workers' sanctions. It has not even provided militants in unions taking action with lists of other workers in the same situation when requested. AAM trade union organiser Simon Sapper preferred to buddy-buddy with Ron Todd than get his hands dirty. He doubtless has a very full 'in' tray and a completely empty 'out'. Certainly, from our point of view, he didn't earn his pay cheque last year. We in *The Leninist*, meagre though our resources are, have done far more to publicise workers' sanctions than *AA News* which has an organisation of hundreds of local groups and some ten thousand national members behind it. This is scandalous.

Instead the AAM has put its resources into trying to convince big business that South Africa today is not such a good bet for investment, and trying to tell Thatcher more or less the same. Attempting to run capitalism better than the capitalists was never a very clever game, and it most certainly should not be the job of a solidarity movement with the South African revolution to act as a ginger group on the bourgeoisie. Nevertheless, this did not stop the AAM leadership giving itself three hearty cheers when Barclay's withdrew from South Africa, even though, as Barclays said, it had nothing to do with pressure from the AAM, but was for purely commercial reasons.

The reliance on Kinnock by the AAM leadership is in danger of leading the Anti-Apartheid Movement down the blind alley of ineffectual half hearted pressure group politics, of merely going through the motions militant solidarity. It is distressing that the ANC and Swapo should lend them credibility with their support. We warn the liberation movements in Southern Africa that Kinnock and co. are just as dangerous to them as ever a Thatcher, Howe or Tebbit.

We must also be clear that those encamped outside the South African embassy provide no answers, just more activity. The answers can and must be found in a mass movement based on the working class, and the fight to build it around workers' direct action today, not in the promises for tomorrow. Twelve billion pounds of British capital lies at the service of South African counterrevolution. The working class in Britain must organise a movement on the scale of the Hands Off Russia! campaign to counter it.

Martin Kaye

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WAPPING

DO NOT permit the enemy to choose the time and place of battle. This is the first rule of war. The second is that it is fatal to enter a war without a singleminded determination to use all means necessary to achieve victory.

On the first count, the leaders of Sogat and the NGA miserably failed in the struggle against Murdoch. For a year they dithered and simply watched him carefully prepare the union-busting Wapping plant. And then for another year, against Murdoch's ruthless determination to win they proved clueless, weak, ineffective and at the end treacherous.

News International print workers should have been brought out before Wapping was ready. If this had been done Murdoch would have been forced to compromise. Certainly, when he sacked the 5,500 the whole of Fleet Street should have been brought out.

Indeed, as job losses throughout what was the Fleet Street press show, there should have been a national newspaper strike long before the Wapping struggle, to ensure that new tech printing in other newspapers was not used to the detriment of printers.

Dean and Dubbins said they had no choice. Sogat and the NGA would have been bankrupted if they had broken the law. This is true. The Tories' anti-union laws have upped the stakes in the class war. It means that cowards can never win. But for those with a will, those who dare to struggle, who are prepared to play for high stakes, victory is far from impossible.

Union leaders willing to risk bankruptcy and jail would have ensured that a national print workers strike took place. They would have confidently called the state's bluff by politicising the strike, by calling for generalised solidarity strikes by other workers.

Dean and Dubbins shunted the struggle into a PR boycott campaign in order not to break the law. They shifted the blame for their failure to budge Murdoch onto the role of the TUC and its refusal to discipline the EETPU. Unless this strategy was ditched, defeat was only a matter of time. Unfortunately the alternative leadership in the London chapels went along with it.

A year ago we made the point that, in a way, the whole Wapping dispute was the *Morning Star's* strike. The *Morning Star* certainly put itself forward as the paper of the strike. Leading strikers, like Hicks and Freeman, were at the head of the alternative leadership.

This alternative leadership certainly refused to countenance a sell-out but was at a loss on how to win. They could not see beyond the boycott strategy. They relied on the trade union consciousness of the readers of the *Sun* and *The Times*. They opposed any suggestion of a national print workers strike. They kept the picketing within the TUC's pathetic guidelines and did their best to keep it peaceful and therefore ineffective.

Just before Dean collapsed the strike on February 5 they were planning one of their "traditional" Grand old Duke of York marches for May 2. This speaks volumes about the way they saw the strike. Everything had become routine, tokenistic and irredeemably economic.

It was essential that the rank and file placed no faith whatsoever in the leadership of Sogat or the

NGA. In point of fact it was essential that a break was made with the backward traditions of reformism, left and right, and a militant rank and file leadership built. Instead, the *Morning Star* acted as the mouthpiece for Hicks and Freeman, who had no independent strategy, who fostered rank and file faith in Dean, Willis and trade union officialdom in general.

The rank and file should have been won to take the running of the struggle into their own hands. Joint strike committees should have been formed across sectional divisions. But after every attempt by Dean to sell out, Hicks and Freeman handed the workers dispute back to her. In point of fact because they lacked a clear sighted communist strategy, they failed at every crucial turning point.

Lessons

When the Labourites in parliament and at the top of the trade union movement priggishly talk about 'educating' the working class, they usually mean pushing legalistic illusions through the WEA, Ruskin College and company sponsored shop stewards courses. In this way working class trust in its present reformist nax-leaders and faith in the bosses law, are instilled and strengthened.

In contrast, for Leninists, the real education of our class is bound up with the class struggle itself. So what is the lesson of Wapping? It can be summed up in one sentence. Workers need a genuine communist leadership. This was perhaps best illustrated over the question of violence.

The Labour Party's reaction in parliament to the pitiless police attack on the anniversary demonstration at Wapping was at best woefully inadequate, at worst treacherous.

Tony Benn could not "understand" why the Home Secretary had refused an inquiry when he had seen with his own eyes savage and brutal baton charges by the police. What else should Tony have expected?

The class struggle is not a game of cricket. Of course the police were violent, that is what they are trained for. Their prime function is not seeing little old ladies across the road, or catching rapists, but protecting the boss class. And at Wapping that meant busting heads for Murdoch. If they had *not* done this on the night of January 24 then, and only then, would Douglas Hurd have agreed to an inquiry.

Gerald Kaufman also wanted an independent public inquiry to "establish the facts". But to prove he could "stand above class differences" he pontificated on the problems of "genuine trade unionists" exercising their "right to stage peaceful demonstrations" when "outside elements not involved in the dispute battered on and exploited a genuine grievance for sectarian purposes."

Taking this perfidious great statesman act to its logical conclusion, former TUC general secretary, Lord Murray of Epping Forest, called for an end to mass picketing at Wapping because it only provides "a Roman holiday for hooligans and Trotskyites."

A few days later this is exactly what Dean and Dubbins did.

But most of the left, including Murray's *bete noire* the Trotskyites as well as the *Morning Star*, 7 Days and the rest could not provide a real alternative. They could not



How to combat police terror? The CCG had no answers.

LESSONS OF DEFEAT

offer anything better than whining complaints about police violence - how the police planned carefully, how they used snatch squads, how they were tooled up and how the defenceless were batoned down.

So the police were nasty. To black youth, miners, supporters of Irish liberation, printers and militant workers in general this was not news. The printers needed action, not platitudes. Public inquiries are not worth a brass farthing.

For us Wapping shows that, instead of pleading to the bourgeois state to be meek and mild, workers need to start learning from our enemy.

Like the bosses, we also need a body of armed men to protect us. In the 1926 General Strike the Communist Party initiated Workers' Defence Corps. We must now resurrect this idea.

The printers' hit squads could easily have been made the core of such defence bodies. Who can doubt that marshalled and disciplined Workers' Defence Corps would have made all the difference on January 24. The demonstration would have been protected, the anarchist riff-raff controlled or ejected, and effective picketing made possible. And what goes for January 24 goes for all of the pre-

vious 365 days of the Wapping dispute.

Above all, like the ruling class, we need ruthless leaders. Compare the single minded Murdoch and the Iron Lady Thatcher to the compliant Dean and the whimsical Christian socialist Benn. The boss class has reformed the consensus Tory Party of the 1950s and 60s into a class war general staff for the 1980s. Wapping shows we need a reformed Communist Party which can play the same role for the working class.

Jack Conrad

CRISIS IN THE CCG

THE SOUTH WALES Communist Campaign Group has published a small pamphlet which goes under the general title *Discussion Papers*. It presents the deliberations of various supporters of the South Wales CCG at its July 1 1986 day school. The pamphlet contains two openings, one a criticism of *The Crisis in the Communist Party* and the other a criticism of *Which Way for Labour?* These founding documents, which defend the *British Road to Socialism* and the Alternative Economic Strategy, are also subjected to blistering attacks by un-named participants.

All in all it makes splendid reading. It is like hearing members of the Jehovah's Witnesses describe the Old Testament as little more than a tribal history full of luxuriant forgeries and then listening to them pointing out the absurd contradictions in the New Testament. Worshipping the shoddy reformist nonsense of the *BRS* and the *AES* may be the official religion of the CCG but the South Wales CCG is clearly heretical.

1. Why ideological openness is a communist duty and why the South Wales CCG are wrong to conceal their views

We have always argued that clarity in the communist movement is no luxury but a necessity. Without it consistent revolutionary practice is impossible. Clarity does not come through hole-in-the-wall discussions, it comes through fraternal discussion and frank debate. A pre-condition for this is openness.

Not so many years ago everything was underground. Now things are different, the various tendencies, groupings and shades in the Party have a much more open existence. It

must be said this is due almost entirely to the existence and efforts of *The Leninist*. From its very first edition it sought to expose the real differences, not just for the sake of it, but to give Party members and the working class the information with which to judge and take sides. *The Leninist* warned that unless these differences were fully and freely debated and resolved in a Leninist fashion there would be no possibility of the crisis in the Party being positively resolved.

We think it is wrong of the South Wales CCG not to have made its *Discussion Papers* freely available to all members of the Communist Party, or even the CCG. Why no ad in the *Morning Star*? Why no letters to the *CCG Review* announcing it? The very future of our CPGB is at stake. There is no excuse for keeping ones views to a select few. If their wide circulation disrupts CCG 'unity' such 'unity' is not worth a brass farthing. Communists have a duty to honestly state what they think, and that presupposes publicity and if they do not do this, others should force their hand. This is what we have done with the Straight Leftists' *Communist* and it is what we will now do with the closet oppositionists in the CCG.

So even though (also because) the South Wales CCG has decided to keep access to its *Discussion Papers* to a closed circle we have decided to make them public. We believe this will help to expose the rotten revisionism and organisational fragility of the CCG.

The South Wales CCG comrades have deep differences not only with the Party leadership in 16 St John Street, but also with the alternative leadership in William Rust House. And the differences are not minor or technical, they are fundamental. In fact, as the South Wales *Discussion Papers* point to the existence of irreconcilable differences with the

CCG leadership clique, we feel it entirely legitimate to suggest to the South Wales CCGers that their place is not in the CCG.

Instead of conducting a futile debate with the leadership of the CCG, going along with their plans to split our CPGB, you should enter into discussions with comrades who support the perspective of reforging the CPGB along Leninist lines.

2. The BRS and the AES, what they are and why they tie the CCG to bourgeois society

Marxists did not invent the idea that revolution is the only way to overcome the contradictions of capitalism. This is not abstract doctrine, it is the truth. All of Marx's writings on the inevitability of capitalist crisis, the need for revolution and the dictatorship of the proletariat have been confirmed in our century.

It is revolution which has made the dictatorship of the proletariat and socialism a fact in the twentieth century, not utopian nostrums like the *AES* and the *BRS*. Our defence of the idea of revolution is therefore not because we like blood, gore and violence. No, it is simply a question that revolution is the only way to overcome capitalism's contradictions and liberate humanity from the shackles of class society.

Commitment to Marxism means a commitment to the truth and the truth means that genuine communists should not give an inch to reformism. Yet although the South Wales CCG comrades are critics of the *AES* and the *BRS*, they are members of a faction which proclaims itself the true defender of the *AES* and the *BRS*. Our South Wales CCGers have therefore not given an inch to reformism, they

have given a mile.

The plain truth is that the CCG is one hundred percent reformist. It was formed on the basis of defending the politics of the *BRS* and *AES*. This means it is attacking today's Eurocommunism by defending ten year old Eurocommunism. The current, 1978, edition of the *BRS* was heavily influenced by the then ideas of Eurocommunism, as anyone who remembers the debate that raged around the *BRS Draft* in 1977 will tell you. But even without the specifically Eurocommunist input, the *BRS* was always thoroughly reformist.

The *BRS* insists we place our faith in Labour Party governments and transforming parliament. More than that, it considers capitalist rule relies more on consent than coercion and imperialism is always considered in the past tense. Indeed in all five editions of the *BRS* socialism is presented in purely evolutionary terms.

Of course the Euros now consider the snails pace reformism of the 1978 *BRS* overambitious. They are increasingly giving up all hope of ever seeing a left Labour government, let alone socialism. Not surprisingly *Marxism Today* editorial board member Bob Rowbothorn now actually calls himself a reformist.

According to the Eurocommunists themselves their abandonment of radicalism is not because of a great historic upheaval or event but a necessary realignment because Thatcher's two general election victories have shifted politics in Britain to the right. Well certainly, as Eurocommunism is a form of bourgeois politics it has been dragged to the right in Thatcher's wake. But on a deeper level Euro new realism reflects capitalism's deepening contradictions. As capitalism breaks down, cannot meet the basic needs of the masses and drives towards war as its only salvation, those who are committed to a reformist road to

socialism get rid of their socialism in order to keep their reformism. This paradox comes as no surprise to us. We understand full well that the difference between our Leninism and the Euros' reformism is not about means to a common end but different ends. We want communism, they merely want to reform capitalism.

The Euros are obviously not alone in this. The CCG has the same programme, the same goal, the same philosophy, the same contempt for the idea of revolution and the same goal as Eurocommunism. Its attempt to fight today's revisionism using yesterday's revisionism shows that it only differs from Eurocommunism by degree. Eurocommunism is a further step down the revisionist road, but the CCG is only a short distance behind.

Of course, the CCG recognises the crisis of capitalism (or more accurately its symptoms) and the class struggle. But so do the Eurocommunists. As we have said the real question is, what conclusions does one draw?

Because the CCG cannot see beyond the narrow horizon of reformism it accepts bourgeois legality and as with the Eurocommunists it never talks about the need to intensify the class struggle, it never talks about the role of a Communist Party being to prepare the working class ideologically and organisationally for the necessary revolutionary seizure of state power.

This means that the CCG ends up, just like the Euros, not fighting for the bakery but bickering about how to distribute the crumbs of capitalism. The CCG, just like the Eurocommunists, says unemployment, industrial decline, the export of capital, rioting in the streets, can all be overcome if only the correct policies are pursued, if only enough money is spent. But capitalism is in crisis and can only survive if profitability is restored. And that means the working class suffering mass unemployment, falling living standards and increased state oppression. Capitalism cannot alleviate the condition of the working class, only socialism can. The pauperisation of the working class cannot be overcome using the capitalist state, but only by smashing the capitalist state.

The CCG cannot show us one country where the capitalist crisis has been overcome through an AES or one country where the working class has become the ruling class through a BRS! The reason? No such country exists. So why does the CCG defend such dangerous illusions?

The South Wales CCG comrades do not really ask the question. Surely the CCG's defence of the Euros old AES and BRS must be an example of opportunism. What else is it, an intellectual slip? To suggest such a thing is to desert Marxist dialectical and historical materialism for the Freudian fairy stories that today pass for history in bourgeois circles. No, quite simply the CCG is opportunist just like Eurocommunism, and opportunism has social origins, it does not result from disturbed brain waves or bad potty training.

As the South Wales CCG know, opportunism is a result of the influence of bourgeois ideas on the working class movement. More than that, these bourgeois ideas tie opportunist political trends hand and foot to bourgeois society itself. In other words the CCG is like the Eurocommunists because it is a bourgeois trend in our communist movement. Do the comrades in the South Wales CCG agree? Perhaps they do, but for the sake of their goal of having "influence" in the CCG they do not say so. If this is so, then they would do well to look at what has happened to the leftists who in their search for relevance, have attached themselves to Kinnoch and the Labour Party — how left wing are they now comrades?

3. Lessons of the Russian revolution and why we must wage a relentless struggle against the CCG

With the crisis of imperialism the power of opportunism is eroded. This does not mean opportunism ceases to exist, in fact the necessity of capitalism fostering it increases. This phenomenon should not surprise students of the Russian revolution. Russia provided very thin soil for opportunism and reformism to flourish. Despite this, after the February revolution the Mensheviks and Socialist Revolutionaries were dominant in the soviets, indeed they were given governmental power by the Russian bourgeoisie as a last resort to

save it from the Bolsheviks.

The masses could only break from opportunists by testing them and directly seeing their programmes play into the hands of the capitalists, the landlords and the warmongers. As the opportunists exposed themselves the Bolsheviks grew in strength and by October they were in the majority and ready to seize state power for the working class.

The Bolsheviks could not have won power or kept it unless they ruthlessly fought the opportunist Mensheviks and SRs. But as well as fighting parties founded on opportunism it was just as vital to combat the inevitable manifestations of opportunism within the Bolshevik Party itself — a party founded on the principles of Marxism.

For Lenin a "united Party organisation, a consistent revolutionary Marxist line" presupposed "the fullest clarity, frankness and outspokenness in relationship between the various groups, trends, and shades in our Party." (CW Vol.7 p.444) To the philistine this seemed like hair splitting but October 1917 brilliantly showed that ideological struggle was not a diversion from the real struggle, it was a vital preparation for it.

The history of opportunism in Britain goes back a lot longer than in any other country and it has penetrated much deeper. Britain was the first industrial country and the first to become imperialist. Of course the strength of opportunism in our working class movement has to some extent a direct relationship to Britain's standing as an imperialist power. So it is important to note that since 1945 British imperialism has suffered a continued relative decline, and since the early 1970s this decline has accelerated.

What this means is that deep in society's womb the revolution is gestating. We therefore say no time must be lost, no effort spared in fighting for a Communist Party with a consistent revolutionary line. For us capitalism's difficulties are a clarion call to action.

We are convinced Britain is on course towards profound crisis and we are equally convinced that this will present both great revolutionary opportunities for the working class and great dangers. Put simply if communists in Britain can grasp the lessons of Lenin and the Bolshevik Party, we can make our country into a powerful bastion of the world revolution. But if we allow opportunism to go unchallenged we will, as sure as the sun will rise tomorrow, suffer a defeat just as cataclysmic as our comrades in Germany in 1933. In other words, to seize the opportunities the future will present and avoid the perils of counterrevolutionary terror, the working class needs a Bolshevik-type party — a Communist Party armed with the ideas of Marxism-Leninism, and purged of all forms of opportunism.

How does the CCG respond to capitalism's slide towards a new general crisis? It wrings its hands about the social evils that result from unemployment, it wails about the de-industrialisation of Britain and in desperation it dredges up the AES. The fact is that the AES is not a plan for revolutionary action, it is a reformist plan to save Britain and offset British capitalism's decline by transferring the burden of the crisis onto foreigners.

What a way for communists to respond to capitalism's crisis. What a proof of our contention that the CCG is, like the Eurocommunists, tied to bourgeois society. The only light at the end of the CCG's opportunist tunnel is the light of defeat and counterrevolution.

It is a duty therefore for communists to ruthlessly and openly combat the ideas of the CCG. Genuine communists must fight the opportunism that is the CCG. It is futile to fight opportunism within it. It is a faction founded on, imbued with and permanently committed to opportunism.

Therefore communists worthy of the name must clearly differentiate themselves from those who claim to be fighting revisionism through fighting the Eurocommunists when in reality they defend revisionism through defending the BRS and the AES. Those Marxists who do not break from the CCG can, if they have sufficient talent, end up playing a centrist role like Karl Kautsky in the Second International.

This pope of Marxism represented a trend which excused the rightist practices of the opportunism of trade union and party officialdom by using revolutionary phraseology. The eventual renegade of Kautskyite centrism should sound as a grave warning for those who seek to excuse the opportunism of the CCG today.

4. Why it is not enough just to reject the AES and the BRS. Why we must go to the root of the matter

On page seven of the *Discussion Papers* the BRS is rightly said to be "absent" of "any Marxist-Leninist analysis of the bourgeois state, of social democracy, of the leading role of the Communist Party". Indeed in the BRS "British imperialism and its impact on the working class movement is played down". And again, according to the *Discussion Papers*, in the BRS we do not have "proletarian internationalism" but "national uniqueness and isolationism". The AES fares no better. *Which Way for Labour?* — the CCG's pamphlet defending the AES — is not only slated for not assessing "the economic returns of imperialism" but for "hopeless confusion". (p 14).

This is all very well. No genuine communist would disagree. But it only scratches the surface of things. Marxism is about getting below the surface. The comrades in the South Wales CCG would do well to look at our excellent article on the AES by Frank Grafton in *The Leninist* No 1 and to James Marshall's analysis of the BRS in No 4. Comrades, we think you would learn a thing or two.

The problem is not that you think the AES and the BRS are principled platforms. No, the real problem is why this reformism was so easily accepted in the CPGB? Why was there no real opposition to it? Who "opened the door" for it and why should honest communists, like those in the South Wales CCG, be in a faction which has as its whole reason for existence the defence of reformism as enshrined in the AES and the BRS? At best we only get half truths from the South Wales CCGers.

Thankfully the comrades do not imagine the BRS, the drift towards social democracy in our Party and Eurocommunism sprung into existence out of the blue in 1977, 1981 or 1983, as various prominent figures on the CCG's Steering Committee have stupidly stated in defence of their personal role in the highest echelons of the Party bureaucracy. The comrades understand that such phenomena must have a history and that the problem goes back some considerable time, indeed they quite rightly point to 1935 being a decisive year.

Yet while the *Discussion Papers* can trace the origins of today's sorry state to developments encapsulated in the decisions of Comintern's Seventh (and last) Congress in 1935, they exonerate the Soviet comrades from any responsibility for what has happened in Britain. Thus Harry Pollitt is slated by the *Discussion Papers* but any relationship between his opportunism and the Soviet Union is dismissed with hack phrases about the CPSU, as if it were Hegel's 'world spirit'.

This is to turn Karl Marx on his head. Pollitt might have been a most enthusiastic advocate of class collaboration, abandoning revolution and retreating into national narrowness, but he was only carrying out the logic of the Seventh Congress. And who can doubt that the CPSU was the guiding force in Comintern. Indeed far from the Soviet Union being the 'world spirit' its narrow diplomatic interests opened the door, albeit accidentally, to the Eurocommunist plague we have today. We say this not because we want to slander the Soviet Union but because we are true friends who consider the Soviet state and Party leadership human just like the rest of us, and therefore capable of making mistakes and even committing crimes.

Communists understand the need for the truth, so let us speak the truth. The CPSU was stunned by the victory of the Nazis in Germany, the ease with which the Communist Party of Germany was crushed and, fearful of German invasion, it discarded all the centrist leftism of the so-called Third Period and with extreme haste tried to align itself with the bourgeois democracies against German revisionism.

This was not necessarily wrong for the Soviet state. What was, though, was the Soviet Party turning Comintern into what must be described as a diplomatic pawn, an arm of Soviet diplomacy to facilitate Soviet state policy. The door for opportunism was thus held wide open by the CPSU and foreign communists were urged to go through it (which most did with enthusiasm).

Communists had to be eminently respectable, they had to wave the national flag, show that they and the Soviet Union were safe and would be good allies. As the South Wales CCG illustrates, Harry Pollitt loved it, he was in his element. But the needs of diplomacy change like the wind and with every turn opportunism became ever more intractable, ever more a way of life, ever more revolting.

Communists in the bourgeois democracies first courted the favours of 'progressive' imperialist politicians, then after the signing of the Soviet-German non-aggression pact they had to equate these very same politicians with the Nazis and following Germany's attack on the Soviet Union in 1941 everything was thrown into reverse. Communists indulged in the most excessive patriotism and class collaborationism for the sake of the wartime alliance. Thus the Soviet Party leadership not only acquiesced to the growth of opportunism in the world communist movement, it created a Frankenstein's monster. As is their way, this is something the South Wales CCGers fight shy of even considering.

Communists should stop extolling the so-called virtues of the Seventh Congress. Its main decisions, its spirit, ran counter to the preceding six congresses — not least the first four, which produced theses, resolutions and manifestos to which all genuine communists owe a profound debt.

We are interested in the truth no matter how painful. The language of the Seventh Congress might seem very militant and orthodox compared with the liberal dribble of *Marxism Today*, but it represented a decisive, qualitative and in the end self-destructive turn to the right. That is not to say everything was hunky-dory before 1935 — far from it — but after 1935 the communist movement the world over systematically junked the idea of revolution in theory as well as practice.

The Seventh Congress was a Pandora's Box and it unleashed a plague of opportunism throughout the world communist movement. The suggestion made in the *Discussion Papers* (Discussion 1 of Opening 1) that the Seventh Congress did not lead to communists subordinating themselves to social democracy is self-delusion. It is no good claiming social democracy was "compelled to accept communist initiatives" (p 8) when one does not look at what kind of initiatives the communists were proposing. They were, as we all know, proposing reformist, pacifist and class collaborationist initiatives.

The *Discussion Papers* quote extensively the baneful revisionism which the post-Seventh Congress Pollitt came out with, but no contributor dares generalise from this about the world communist movement, of which Pollitt was an honoured leader.

If Pollitt suffered from revisionism, so did the majority of our world communist movement. Check the facts comrades. Pollitt was no exception, he was the rule. What is more, to attack Pollitt but not the CPSU is to attack the monkey not the organ grinder. If you criticise Pollitt you must go on and criticise Stalin, the CPSU and the leaders of the world communist movement. Not to do so is to descend into cowardly, self-serving sophistry. This is utterly alien to Marxism-Leninism. Pollitt was not alone in his opportunist outpourings. Similar stuff came from the mouths of Duclos, Dutt, Togliatti, Thorez and Stalin himself.

The South Wales comrades do not want to believe this. They want to think of Britain as being somehow different from other countries. The *Discussion Papers* touch upon problems in the USA during the immediate post-war period but project the majority of CPs today, above all the CPSU, as pristine Marxists and proletarian internationalists.

For them nothing is wrong with the world communist movement it is full of power and vigour — the CPGB is merely a spot on the sun — it is a blemish which can hardly be detected, such is the brilliance of our world movement.

But we know this is not the case. The world communist movement is in danger of disintegrating. The communist movement in Spain, Italy, Holland, Sweden, Finland, Australia etc is gripped by similar infections to the one that has laid low our CPGB. And without dealing with the problems in the socialist countries, are the healthy (ie for the South Wales CCG, 'pro-Soviet') parties in federal Germany, Ireland, France, the USA, Iran etc really healthy? After all, do they not all have their own version of the BRS? And if the CPGB's BRS always was revisionist, as you South Wales CCGers rightly imply, can the

'BRS's' of other parties be characterised in a different way? Of course not.

Another point the comrades would do well to consider is the fact that JV Stalin no less gave his personal seal of approval to the original *BRS* in 1950 and had a special article on it printed in *Pravda* which was very complimentary. If the real role of the CPSU is not recognised it is impossible to develop a truly rounded analysis of the problems of opportunism in our movement. And without such an analysis help in overcoming the problems in our movement in Britain will be sought from quarters neither willing nor capable of giving that help. More than that, without a rigorous scientific outlook at the end of the day the theoretical flaws of opportunism turn gangrenous and result in political paralysis.

5. Plans for a CCG 'Party'

As the reader will know, the Party crisis has now assumed a particularly dangerous stage with the move away from Communist Party politics by many comrades around the *Morning Star*. Ray Colvin's letter in the *Morning Star* of February 5 confirms this. It is clear from reading it that the majority of the Communist Campaign Group Steering Committee have opted for a breakaway after this year's Party congress in November.

That their national organiser pens a letter which, however cryptically and dishonestly, calls for a split, points to a triumph by Photis Lysandrou, who at the last London CCG conference championed the idea of a split to follow the 40th Congress, against the doubting Thomases like Mike Hicks and Mary Rosser.

They warned Lysandrou that a CCG split would not get the *Morning Star*, would itself split "four or five ways" and anyway the socialist countries "did not want a split". But once you set up something like the CCG there is no going back. The CCG could not stay in its half-way house for long. As we argued from the very foundation of the CCG, at the end of the day the logic of its opportunism would propel it towards a full scale liquidationist split.

Having seen the Soviet helping hand in the creation of the Communist Party of the Peoples of Spain a few years ago, the CCG leadership have looked to Moscow to give their venture material assistance, if not legitimacy. If the CPSU could ignore the protests of the Communist Party of Spain, why should they take any notice of the much smaller CPGB? Yet it seems unlikely that the CPSU, under Gorbachev, would actively encourage a split in the CPGB, or even give dual recognition. Such an approach belongs to the Brezhnev era. The CPSU at its 27th Congress made it perfectly clear that it is not particularly concerned with who leads other CPs as long as they make the right sounds on the question of peace.

Can anyone doubt that comrade McLennan has gone out of his way to do just that? In fact he is like a born again Straight Leftist, praising as he does Gorbachev's peace initiatives on every possible occasion.

Why then should the Soviet comrades intervene in the CPGB? As the saying goes: don't kick the piano player when the tune is sweet. They are thankful for comrade McLennan's support for their peace offensive and have no desire to question his motives. Anyway they are increasingly looking to social democracy as an ally in the fight for peace, not communist parties.

This was confirmed in a recent edition of *Tribune* (February 20 1987). In an interview by Andrew Murray (a leading Straight Leftist!) Vadim Zagladin, secretary of the Supreme Soviet foreign affairs committee, sounded more like a right wing social democrat than a left wing one when he posed the "anti-capitalist policies of the past" to the "need for humanity to pool its efforts". In fact for comrade Zagladin "cooperation between communists and social democrats is more vital than it used to be" and to cap it all he added that "If one compared the programme adopted by the last congress of the Socialist International, meeting in Lima, with the programme adopted by last year's Soviet Communist Party congress, then one would find many common points." Reading such statements we are driven to conclude that the CPSU is not only buttering up social democrats but could be about to take a turn to the right of the likes of 1935.

So it looks like a CCG Party will be just another breakaway, another pro-Labour Party New Communist Party. The chances of Gorbachev playing Santa Claus and trans-

ferring Soviet support from the pro-Labour Party CPGB Executive Committee to the pro-Labour Party CCG Party once it has been formed are a million to one; he is more concerned with "cooperation" with social democracy.

But whether we are right or wrong about Soviet support, there is no future for a CCG 'Party'. With or without Soviet patronage it will, like the NCP, quickly suffer nemesis in remorseless decline, irrelevance and mind numbing lethargy. This fate cannot be escaped.

The CCG split will nonetheless be a blow to our movement. It will take a number of potentially healthy comrades out of our ranks and away from the fight to reforge the CPGB. Moreover it will cause hundreds, perhaps thousands, to simply drop out of political activity altogether as the ideologically amorphous, rather free-wheeling CCG membership is forced into the bureaucratic centralist straightjacket.

Naturally, given the CCG leadership's reflex reaction against the very word split, given its arrogance, its split will not be presented as a split. The CCG big-wigs certainly do not suffer from honesty. No, just as the CCG and the Straight Leftists today deny they are a faction, the CCG split will claim to be the Party.

Stating in advance that the 40th Congress will be gerrymandered, certain they cannot win it, they will convene their own 'Party' congress. This will elect a CPGB leadership from among the CCG's grantees and then call upon all communists to recognise it. As they will claim the name of our Communist Party of Great Britain, its programme and rules as their own, they will say their aim of "re-establishing the Communist Party" will have been fulfilled.

This will mean Britain will have two organisations claiming to be the CPGB with the same programme and the same rules. Shakespeare asked "What's in a name?" In the CCG 'Party's' case, rule 15b, it seems.

Our Party's rule 15b will no doubt be changed by the November congress. Our rules will no longer commit communists to supporting the *Morning Star*. And quite rightly too. They will be changed to take into account Chater's *Morning Star* UDI. Support for the *Morning Star* will be replaced by support for 7 Days. Other than that there will be no difference between the CCG Party and the real McCoy. The CCG Party will be a mirror image of our CPGB — at least in terms of rules and programme.

Do the comrades from the South Wales CCG really think this worth splitting for? Is this something to fight for? Does the working class need another party committed to a reformist road to socialism? Will the CCG's "re-establishing the Communist Party" resolve the crisis in our communist movement? No, no, no, no. The CCG is part of the problem, not the solution. And while the comrades of the South Wales CCG go along with their leadership, while they remain part of the same faction, they merely provide a left cover for the CCG's rightist leaders.

6. The perspectives of the South Wales CCG and the political practice of the CCG

We do not have the space for a point by point criticism of the views of the South Wales CCG as presented in its *Discussion Papers*, let alone a polemic against the AES and the *BRS*, but we can make certain observations, firstly about the South Wales CCG and its perspectives and secondly about the political practice of the CCG.

A CCG Party will not be a genuine Communist Party. It will be a New Communist Party Mark II. It will be incapable of providing communist leadership to the class. Indeed the CCG split will, at the first serious test, itself split and split again.

Do the comrades from South Wales CCG really imagine that their half-baked left centrism will be exalted into being the dominant ideology of the CCG Party? Do they think the likes of Chater, Costello and Gill will be convinced by their *Discussion Papers*?

More likely these old hands at the ways and means of bureaucratic centralism will effortlessly crush such a manifestation of what they will indubitably consider a dangerous example of ultra-leftism. After all, their loyalty to the *BRS* and the AES does not come from a whim or an intellectual flight of fantasy, but the

solid reality of the labour bureaucracy and bourgeois society — and what respect does this engender for democracy and free debate? Little to none!

Will the South Wales CCG then settle for a stunted and impotent existence as the Kautskys of the CCG Party? Perhaps they think they can win Photis Lysandrou, Jeff Sawtell and other former critics of the *BRS* to return to the fold and win a left majority in the CCG 'Party'. Again, given the rightist trajectory of the CCG leadership (not least Photis Lysandrou) and its history of bureaucratic centralism, given that this approach is actually thought of as democratic centralism in these quarters, the South Wales lefts in the CCG 'Party' will be expected to keep mum, carry out the line or all they will achieve is the dubious honour of being the first of what will become a long line of expulsions.

Why are we so certain about predicting schism after schism in a CCG Party? The reason lies in the fact that the CCG is ideologically founded on opportunism. Unity in such an organisation can only be obtained using bureaucratic methods. Genuine democratic centralism is impossible. Moreover the CCG contains a whole variety of different opportunist strands with widely differing views, traditions and perspectives. It cannot fuse the likes of Ken Gill, Tony Chater, Tom Durkin and Robert Griffith into a unity unless it uses bureaucratic centralism.

Already when confronted with issues like Ireland, feminism, war and peace, the CCG is at sixes and sevens. Even a comparatively minor question such as the McGoldrick affair in Brent saw CCG supporters on both sides of the barricades. The teachers' struggle even had some CCGers supporting the NUT's sell-out, others opposing it.

The writing is therefore on the wall for the CCG. It will either end up ineffective because it cannot achieve any meaningful unity in action by its heterogeneous and ageing membership, or its dominant right opportunist leadership faction will attempt to achieve unity in action by expelling or driving out all who disagree with it and thus ironically become ineffective by reducing the CCG to a Derby and Joan sect like the NCP.

While the CCG has various strands, there can be little doubt where the leadership wants to take the CCG — to where the bureaucracy of the official labour movement stands. This is the case over unemployment, class war prisoners and voting for Kinnock's Labour Party.

At every turn of events the CCG leadership has not voiced a clear, principled communist alternative to the mis-leaders who at present dominate our labour movement. The reason for this is simple. The CCG does not really understand the need for communist leadership and is certainly not capable of giving it. The CCG can only talk in platitudes about communist leadership.

This was definitively proved by the whole Wapping dispute. Wapping was in a very real sense the *Morning Star's* strike. Leading CCGers were in the forefront of this struggle. True, they did not betray the News International strikers in the way Dean did. But they allowed her to regain the initiative over rank and file resistance time and time again.

The CCGers Hicks and Freeman had no strategy except the pathetic Dean and Dubbins boycott campaign. As a tactic, the fight to encourage a boycott of the *Sun* and *The Times* was perfectly correct. As a strategy, it was a disaster and doomed to fail.

Hicks and Freeman could not bring themselves to countenance a fight for an all out national newspaper strike as part of a strategy of politicising the Wapping dispute and generalising it, as part of a working class offensive against Thatcher and the job-slashing ruling class. In this they were fully and effusively backed by the *Morning Star*. It is therefore no polemical sleight of hand to say the failure of the Wapping dispute was a political failure, not just of Hicks and Freeman, but of the *Morning Star* and the CCG.

At the heart of this failure lies the CCG's commitment to the AES and the *BRS*, both of which look to the trade union bureaucracy as the agent of socialist transformation in Britain. This means the task is to gain influence over trade union fat cats, not pit the rank and file against them. The AES and *BRS* contain no notion whatsoever that trade union officialdom constitutes a weak-link in the working class movement. No, the AES and the *BRS* project the idea that the trade union bureaucracy is the working class movement. With this in mind it is hardly surprising that Hicks and Freeman proved so servile to Dean and

Dubbins.

Obviously the danger of the politics of the AES and the *BRS* are not confined to one, albeit important, industrial dispute. The AES and the *BRS* rely on the trade union bureaucracy in general and the Labour Party in particular. The respective functions of the AES and the *BRS* are quite simply to provide the corrupt, treacherous, unimaginative and counterrevolutionary trade union and labour bureaucrats with a minimum and maximum programme.

The AES minimum programme is projected as the only realistic way out of the capitalist crisis for them, the only way to reverse de-industrialisation and thus reassert their influence over the powers that be; the *BRS* maximum programme is projected as the only realistic way to go from the corridors of influence to the rooms of power.

That the perspective of revolution, in the Marxist sense, is dismissed as a mere fantasy, is nothing new to the labour movement in Britain. It has been dominated by reformist ideas for nearly one and a half centuries. What is different, however, is that the CCG is attempting to defend the AES and the *BRS* in the name of fighting revisionism in the CPGB.

True, the Eurocommunists want to revise the *BRS* but they will not, as the *Discussion Papers* claim "ditch it" or "rewrite it beyond recognition" (p 2). This suggests there is some value in the *BRS*, something worth defending in it. The *BRS* is and always has been revisionist. Because of this we do not agree with the *Discussion Papers* that the first 1951 *BRS* opened "the door" to a "non-class approach" (p 3). As we have indicated the *BRS* represented the crystallisation, the definitive programmatic influence, of bourgeois ideas in the communist movement, which found concrete expression at the Seventh Congress of Comintern in 1935.

7. Why remain in the CCG?

The *Discussion Papers*, despite the intentions of the authors, reveal for all to see that the CCG leadership is ideologically rightist, intellectually dull and politically in the camp of revisionism. In point of fact so damning are the *Discussion Papers* of the CCG's two founding documents that it comes as a surprise to learn that one of the authors happily sits on the CCG's Steering Committee.

This is no small matter. The CCG is an opportunist clique. Of course our Party has many opportunist cliques — not least the clique that at present dominates the Executive Committee. But being a member of the Party does not require the slightest ideological compromise by a genuine communist to any opportunist clique. On the other hand attaching oneself to one of the opportunist groups is surely a statement of ideological agreement. Whatever the comrades in the South Wales CCG may say, they have not only lined up organisationally with the CCG but they have also lined up politically with its opportunism.

It is the duty of Leninists to defend the Party as the apple of our eye. Because our Party is dominated by opportunism, riddled with opportunist groups which are determined to liquidate our Party, because Leninist views are banned, it is necessary to have an unofficial Party press in order to save the Party and reforge it. Leninists argue for Party unity in action, but unlike the South Wales CCG comrades, do not subordinate themselves to the factional discipline of a self-appointed opportunist clique. Leninists understand full well that only with open ideological struggle can lasting unity in our Party be won, only by open ideological struggle can our Party be saved and made into an instrument of revolution.

The health of our Party cannot be restored by engaging in futile intrigue within an opportunist clique. The cause of the sickness in our Communist Party of Great Britain is ideological. While the Party crisis has often assumed a purely organisational form there can be no doubt that at its heart it is ideological.

The South Wales CCG comrades would do well to take their own medicine. On page nine of its *Discussion Papers* it is said: "We in Britain have ... not merely not exposed the Kautskys in our own movement — but have, in essence, followed them ... with disastrous consequences." This is true. So why repeat the mistake? Indeed we would argue you are compounding the mistake: in accepting the leadership of Chater, Hicks and Costello et al the South Wales CCG is not following British Kautskys but a pack of British Bernsteins.

Jack Conrad



CCG DE CYMRU

SOUTH WALES DISCUSSION PAPERS

OPENING — OPPORTUNISM AND THE CRISIS IN THE COMMUNIST PARTY

SIGNS OF THE CRISIS

THE intensification of the inner-party struggle has been highlighted by a series of events in recent years:

- At the 38th (November 1983) Congress a large and organised minority of Eurocommunists were elected to the Party's executive committee (EC); the older and more industrial-based 'McLennanite' revisionists retained control, while Derek Robinson and *Morning Star* editor Tony Chater were not re-elected.
- In June 1984, there were two rival slates of candidates at the *Morning Star* AGM. The voting was 50-50, with 2 EC candidates and 3 *Star* management committee candidates elected.
- In November 1984, the North-West England district congress elected a new district committee composed overwhelmingly of critics of the EC and the outgoing district committee. The new district committee was dissolved by the EC one year later.
- One week after the North-West congress, the EC collapsed the London district congress to avoid another heavy defeat in the election of a new district committee.
- In May 1985, a special national congress (the 39th) was held under the optimistic slogan 'A United Party Behind the British Road to Socialism'. At this congress, preceded by disciplinary measures against London communists and by widespread rigging of delegate elections, a Eurocommunist majority was elected to the EC. *Star* editor Chater, deputy editor David Whitfield, Mike Hicks, Tom

Durkin and others were expelled from the Party.

- One month later, the EC was trounced by 3,000 votes to 2,000 at the *Morning Star* AGM — the biggest decision-making meetings of communists for decades. More members of the *Star* management committee were expelled the following month.
- Also in June 1985, the Communist Campaign Group was formed to rally communists against the disastrous course of the Eurocommunist EC.
- In June 1986, the EC was defeated by a 3 to 1 margin at the *Star* AGM.

Throughout this period, the EC has carried out dissolutions, expulsions and deregistrations (back-door expulsions) of Party members and organisations on a scale never seen before in the Communist Party of Great Britain — not even during the bitter debates of the late 1920s and late 1930s.

All this has taken place against a background of continuing — even accelerating — decline in the Party's membership, organisation, strength and influence. The following statistics illustrate this decline, and put it into a longer historical perspective:

- Immediately after the 1926 General Strike, Party membership rose to 7,400. During the Popular Front period it reached 12,500 in 1937, soaring to over 50,000 by 1946. During the Cold War it dropped to 33,000 by 1956, and to 24,700 after the crushing of counterrevolution in Hungary. It climbed to 33,500 by 1965, but has dropped (except in the mid-1970s) ever since — reaching 15,000 in 1984 and 11,000 in 1986.
- In Wales, membership peaked at 4,000 in 1946, dropping to 1,700 in 1972, 1,000 in 1984 and 750 in 1986.
- Membership of the Young Communist League stood at over 6,000 in 1967. By 1983 it was 627, and down to 546 on paper in 1984 (with fewer than 100 activists).
- Domestic sales of the *Daily Worker/Morning Star* have fallen steadily from 115,000 at the start of the Cold War in 1951, to 73,000 in 1960, and to 13,000 in 1984.
- In 1939 there were 150 workplace branches of the Party in the London area alone; the number represented at Party congress from the whole of Britain was 122 in 1971, 34 in

1983 and just 15 in 1985.

- 21 Party candidates at the 1945 general election polled 103,000 votes; 100 candidates polled 92,000 votes in 1950; 35 candidates polled 11,600 votes in 1983.
- The 1951 edition of the Party's programme *The British Road to Socialism* sold 200,000 copies. The print-run for the 1977/78 edition was 20,000.

EUROCOMMUNIST DIAGNOSIS AND CURE

Throughout the recent crisis, the EC and Eurocommunists have tried to play down the size of the opposition elements who have disrupted the Party and hijacked the *Morning Star*. Supposed success stories on the other hand, such as *Marxism Today* and the creation of a Eurocommunist-influenced soft left in the labour movement, are played up as proof that the crisis is only small and/or temporary. The Party's declining industrial and trade union base is explained away as being the inevitable by-product of Britain's industrial decline (and of the Party's failure, due to narrow and sectarian attitudes, to adjust to the new situation). The collapse of the YCL and the CP students organisation — both of them strong before falling into Eurocommunist hands — is either not mentioned in polite company, or is explained away by the appeal of ultra-leftism for young people. This, of course, is no explanation at all. Many of those who presided over the collapse of these organisations are now either in the SDP or sitting on the new Eurocommunist EC.

In industry and among youth, the EC and its supporters would have us believe that the main determining factors are outside the control of the party — and that any criticism should therefore be aimed only at narrow and sectarian opposition elements.

According to the previous McLennanite majority on the EC, the main internal reasons for the decline were:

- that the policies and practices of the Party were becoming outmoded;
- that a re-think of these policies and practices was being impeded by a stubborn, tradi-

tionalist and narrow-visioned minority, mainly industrial comrades and others who were gathering around the *Morning Star*.

This minority, it was claimed, opposed key concepts of the *British Road* - notably the need to create a broad democratic alliance of progressive forces whose struggles would be linked up to create the conditions for a left government and an advance to socialism. This minority neglected non-working class social forces, was unwilling to criticise the socialist countries, and would not accept changes in trade union organisation and practice. But EC and Eurocommunist criticisms of male chauvinism, bureaucracy, economism and 'workerism' - real and perceived - in the Party and labour movement, quickly turned into attacks on communist industrial work, trade unionism, class consciousness and class politics.

The diagnosis of the now dominant Eurocommunists is even more far-reaching. Rather than merely interpreting the *British Road* in a more rightward direction, they believe it to be wrong or out-of-date in fundamental respects: it is too class-orientated, with not enough emphasis on the new social forces (a condescending collective term for women, blacks, gays, Greens, single parents etc.); it is too strategically dependent upon the Labour Party, with no progressive role envisaged for the Liberals, SDP, Welsh and Scottish Nationalists, and Greens.

The intention of the Eurocommunists is to ditch the *British Road*, or to rewrite it beyond recognition. What kind of programme and strategy do they seek to put in its place? And what kind of communist party do they think will fit the new circumstances, programme and strategy?

According to Marxism, we live in a capitalist society in the era of imperialism. All races, sexes, nationalities, sections and social strata, and the relations between them, are part of this national and international class system; capitalist exploitation has a profound effect on the forms and content of racial, sexual and national oppression. The abolition of capitalism creates the conditions for the total elimination of these oppressions. Only the main struggle of our epoch, between the capitalists and the working class, makes possible this abolition. But that class struggle has to be politicised, and it needs to be deepened and broadened by embracing all struggles for democratic rights and against oppression - with the working class coming to the fore in them. It is precisely in struggle that working class consciousness is raised and horizons are broadened. Unity can and must be built within the working class, and with those outside it who suffer oppression in capitalist society. Class struggle becomes all-embracing and all-pervading, directed not only against employers, but against all oppressions and against the capitalist system itself. The democratic rights that must be fought for and won under capitalism can then be made more extensive, more concrete and permanent as socialism is developed.

The Eurocommunists see society as a variety of oppressions that are only loosely related to class and economic factors. Our society is a capitalist one, they agree, but this is just one of its characteristics, alongside 'racism', patriarchal, heterosexist etc. Capitalism is reduced to being merely an economic system, almost a base without a superstructure, existing side-by-side with oppressions that are independent or autonomous from it. Similarly, class struggle is re-defined and narrowed down to industrial and trade union affairs. With the decline of the (again narrowly-defined) working class and the Forward March of Labour Halted, this class struggle cannot be the major and underlying one in society. Having confined it to workplace conflict between workers and employers, the Eurocommunists now put class struggle on the same level as - or lower than - the conflict between men and women, black and white, gays and heterosexuals, environmentalists and polluters, super-rich and very poor, etc. They argue that narrow class politics are inadequate in the face of society's wide range of oppressions, pressure groups and so on - although the narrowness is of their own un-Marxist choosing.

Eurocommunists attack the state, including nationalised industries and the civil service, for being centralist, bureaucratic, authoritarian - but whether or not it is a capitalist state is treated as a secondary issue, if an issue at all. Trade unions are criticised in the same terms, even in the same breath. The police, multinational companies,

men, heterosexuals, white people, the rich, are characterised by the oppression they inflict - not primarily by their place and relationships in capitalist society. One frequent *Marxism Today* contributor and CP member has even informed us that "law and order is not a class issue" - and this during the miners' strike!

What does this outlook signify?

That the Eurocommunists have abandoned Marxism and the class view of society and change. The class interests of women, blacks, gays etc. are played down, while the oppressions that afflict them are used to deny and denigrate a class analysis and class solidarity. The Marxist-Leninist basis for an alliance between the working class and non-working class elements - namely their common interest against the capitalist monopolies, the capitalist state and its ideology, to state monopoly capitalism and imperialism in fact - is dropped. Instead the Eurocommunists project a nebulous, loose alliance against oppression, poverty and injustice. A clear Marxist-Leninist formulation is dropped in favour of classical liberalism. The working class is no longer regarded as the revolutionary class (so defined by Marxism because of its place in capitalist production and property relations), and the impetus for change has passed to the new social forces.

The Eurocommunists call for an alliance between the new and old social forces, with all the concessions and adaptations being demanded from the latter. Major obstacles to such unity are narrow class politics and, as far as the Party's contribution is concerned, alignment with the Socialist countries. Outdated loyalties, practices and structures (for example the use of allegedly authoritarian and male-orientated conferences, committees and hierarchies as the means by which trade unions and other progressive bodies conduct their business) also have to be discarded. The autonomy or independence of the new social forces, on the other hand, has to be respected even to the point of no criticism, of not challenging petty bourgeois and separatist tendencies in these movements.

To what extent did the adoption by the Party of the formulation of a broad popular alliance (1951 *British Road*) and a broad democratic alliance (subsequent editions) open the door to this non-class approach? The formulation proposed by the CPSU and other leading parties is that of an anti-monopolies alliance, thus sharpening the focus on the class enemy of the exploited and the oppressed.

The use of state power by the working class and its allies, to defeat the capitalists and construct socialism, is now attacked in *Marxism Today* as 'authoritarian'. New perspectives are therefore being investigated - non-statist socialism, municipal socialism, small-scale co-operatives and communes etc. Thus petty bourgeois utopianism replaces class struggle and the necessity to seize and wield state power.

In the light of this emerging outlook, what kind of Communist Party is required in the view of the Eurocommunists?

The Party must become a catalyst to bring the social forces together on the basis outlined above. It must be an open discussion forum, with only the Marxist-Leninists excluded. The old politics and alignments must be dropped - indeed, one leading Eurocommunist has declared that the whole idea of a world communist movement is outmoded and no longer required. Many of the trends and fads of the new social forces must be accepted and even promoted by the Party. Industrial work is no longer a central concern, and should be put on a different basis: for example, the unions should organise more pop festivals and fewer strikes, while Broad Lefts should become open debating societies rather than vehicles to gain union power and inject Marxist politics. The Party's industrial advisories should be opened up to a wave of non-working class Eurocommunists. Those in the labour movement who resist the drift away from communist or basic class principles will be attacked.

Ultimately, the Party's structures will be broken down, its organisation loosened, its hierarchy dismantled, and democratic centralism phased out once it has served its final purpose of expelling anti-Eurocommunists. The Communist Party will be a loose debating club, think-tank and publishing group, rather like the CPUSA under Browder in the 1940s. The organisational liquidation of the Party will follow inevitably on the heels of its political liquidation.

WHERE ARE THE ROOTS OF THE CRISIS?

Where are the roots of this dilution of the Party's class essence, of the errors on fundamental questions, of the abandonment of Marxist-Leninist principles? What are the factors to be taken into account? Of course, we can go right back to the Party's foundation in 1920 - but for reasons of space, this inquiry will confine itself here to the outward, visible signs of departure.

The 1935 programme of the Party, *For Soviet Britain*, mapped out an 'insurrectionary' road to socialism in which the Communist Party would lead the working class to state power, to a dictatorship of workers' and soldiers' soviets. Social democracy, as represented by the Labour Party and in the trade unions, would be an obstacle - not an ally - in this process, whether it was of the left or the right. Bourgeois democracy was characterised as a hidden, camouflaged dictatorship of capital over labour, exercised through a state machine that would have to be destroyed during the revolutionary transition. Aspects of this programme are open to criticism, but it did not depart from fundamental principles of Marxism-Leninism, although it applied some these principles in a sectarian and dogmatic way.

Did the Popular Front strategy adopted by the seventh (1935) Congress of the Communist International (but actually being formulated and implemented a year or two earlier in some countries) break with Marxism-Leninism? Not in principle. The Comintern debates and resolutions sought to apply these principles to the concrete circumstances of the period, notably the rise of fascism and the danger of imperialist world war. Estimating that social democratic workers could turn in droves to communist politics during the struggle against fascism and war, the main Comintern resolution argued that unity with them must not lead to glossing over the fundamental differences between communism and reformism, must not weaken the criticism of social democracy as "the ideology and practice of collaboration with the bourgeoisie". Nor must the communist parties weaken their own struggle against "the illusion that it is possible to bring about socialism by peaceful, legal methods". Social democratic workers had to be won to the cause of a single mass working class party, committed to establishing a soviet dictatorship of the proletariat. Rectifying communist errors of 'left sectarianism' must not spill over into 'right opportunism', when trying to unite the left in defence of bourgeois democratic liberties, against fascism and imperialist war.

Yet what happened in Britain? The Party put *For Soviet Britain* on the shelf; criticism of social democracy was dropped in the pursuit of influence with the Labour left and a united front with the Labour Party; the goal of soviet power was played down, and bourgeois democratic liberties were lauded with little or no mention of their limitations and distortions under capitalism.

But Marxism-Leninism runs right through the *Draft Programme* for the Party's 16th Congress (scheduled for October 1939 but postponed by the outbreak of war to 1943). On reformism and social democracy (of the left as well as the right), on the state, on the need for a dictatorship of the working class and its allies, the programme bases itself clearly on Marxism-Leninism. The CP, it points out, strives to "win the majority of the working class for the aims and principles of communism". CP affiliation to the Labour Party is seen as part of the struggle to unite the working class movement and create the conditions for winning workers away from Labour reformism. The *Draft Programme* also devotes a large section to British imperialism, and its relationship to social democratic reformism. Yet in February 1939, general secretary Harry Pollitt had called in *Defence of the People* for "strengthening the Labour Party" and for the election of a (Labour dominated) progressive government. Alongside appeals for Popular Front unity in pursuit of a limited programme, there was no criticism of reformism as such - only of the right-wing leaders of social democracy. Underestimating the political impact of imperialism on the labour movement, disregarding the grip of reformism, Pollitt expressed his supreme confidence in the working class as it is: the only problem was one of giving the right lead. Indeed, so politically strong was the labour movement in his estimation, Liberals and

capitalists can serve in a people's government because we have no need to be afraid of them! Reflections of this emerging political line can be seen in the inner-Party struggle that came into the open in 1939, when Pollitt was compelled to resign amid accusations of taking a social chauvinist position at the outset of the war - only to be reinstated two years later.

The postponed 16th Congress in 1943 endorsed the emerging line. It declared that the defeat of fascism would deal such a powerful blow to reaction as to make a peaceful and constitutional road to socialism - through extensive nationalisations - much more possible. The call was issued to strengthen the Labour Party as well as to build a mass Communist Party. But there was no more mention of winning the majority of workers to the aims and principles of communism. The 1939 draft programme was not presented to the congress.

Almost as a footnote to the *Report* of the 1943 congress is this single sentence on page 55: "The dissolution of the Communist International was reported by the Congress". No debate, no dissent. With this one fell swoop, declared the now-restored general secretary Pollitt, Nazi propaganda about "the hoary old hog of the menace of Bolshevism" - designed to turn the western allies against the Soviet Union - had been discredited. Dissolving the Comintern "took Hitler's last trump card right from under his nose". Within three years, though, the cries about 'communist fifth columns' (Winston Churchill) came again louder than ever from the imperialist powers; dissolving the Comintern might have served an important short-term purpose, but at what longer-term cost to proletarian internationalism and the world communist movement?

By May 1945, Pollitt declared on behalf of the Party in *Answers to Questions*: "The doom of fascism is settled, and this armed victory of democracy has led to the weakening of reaction in every country...it has also settled the question of future wars. Likewise it has made it doubly difficult for the reactionary capitalist forces, after a war waged with extreme violence to defend democracy, to resort to violence to crush democracy". (Democracy, note - not bourgeois democracy). Together with the new international situation, in particular the victory of the Soviet Union, unity in the British labour movement would make a peaceful transition to socialism more possible than ever. In fact, an even wider national unity was on the cards... "The most important sections of the capitalist class have also an interest in co-operating in all efforts to solve the urgent problems...Capitalism, in its pre-1939 set-up, had become such a fetter on production that the capitalists themselves find these very fetters a nightmare...Hence there is, up to a point, a common interest between all the progressive sections of the nation, labour and capitalist alike, in finding a common solution".

The danger now, Pollitt argued, was that the working class could underestimate the potential of a Labour-led Government of National Unity.

The first edition in 1951 of the Party's programme, *The British Road to Socialism*, consolidated and elaborated these perspectives. It protested that: "The enemies of communism accuse the Communist Party of aiming to introduce soviet power in Britain and abolish parliament. This is a slanderous misrepresentation of our policy...Britain will reach socialism by her own road".

There would be a peaceful transition to socialism in Britain - with a broad popular alliance of people who favour social change, led by the working class, defeating any attempts at capitalist sabotage and counterrevolution. The key role in the transformation would be played by a Labour-dominated 'People's Government', enacting sweeping changes throughout the state machine, and putting massive measures of 'socialist' nationalisation and state control through parliament... "the people of Britain can transform capitalist democracy into a real people's democracy, transforming parliament, the product of Britain's historic struggle for democracy, into the democratic instrument of the will of the vast majority of her people" (*British Road* 1952 edition).

No more talk of new organs of workers' power, of direct democracy, of any British form of dictatorship of the proletariat - just British special pleading for abandoning the very principle of dictatorship of the proletariat. "Britain's historic struggle for democ-

racy" – whose struggle? Against whom?

No distinction – as there had been in the 1939 draft programme – between 'minimum' and 'maximum' programmes, between reforms under capitalism and goals which require the overthrow of capitalism. Instead, the *British Road* mashed the two together and proposed an alliance that does not change its basis or its composition according to different stages.

Rightwing Labour leaders were claimed to be the problem in the movement, not social democracy itself, and not the other influences and products of imperialism such as racism, chauvinism and economism. In fact, Britain is not considered so much as a major imperialist Nato power (although independence for the British colonies is demanded) – but as an oppressed nation in need of national independence from US imperialism.

The Communist Party's role was to be a (very) junior partner in parliament and the 'People's Government', the organiser of leading trade union activists, and the supplier of programmes to the labour movement and social democracy. There is no explanation in the *British Road* of why the optimistic forecasts of 1945 had gone so wrong – apart from the treachery of rightwing Labour leaders. Why these leaders in the first place? Why the trust in them? Why was the left unable (or unwilling) to turn the 1945-51 Labour government away from its rightwards course?

There was no intense and widespread inner-Party struggle over the adoption in 1951 of the reformist *British Road to Socialism*, no revolt of the membership. Why not? Democratic centralism and loyalty and trust in the leadership are some factors; so was the desire for unity in the face of Cold War pressure. But the basis for replacing a revolutionary programme by a reformist one was laid not at the 1951 congress, but as far back as 1943. There had been a huge influx of members from 1936, tens of thousands, many of them out of anti-fascist and pro-soviet sentiment. At the turning-point congress in 1943, 50% of the delegates had joined the Party after June 1938 – and many of them had less than 12 months membership. This was the period when the Party dropped its fundamental criticisms of social democracy, of bourgeois democracy and of illusions about the road to socialism. It was also a period when massive successes were scored in terms of recruitment, influence in the Labour Party and unions, and mass campaigning on a wide range of issues. Why risk driving away potential recruits and offending new allies, why risk a return to 'sectarian' isolation, why not postpone the polemics on fundamental differences as the Party grows stronger? Such is the fertile ground for right opportunism, as the Comintern congress had warned. By 1943, most Party members and delegates were not equipped theoretically to detect and challenge a slide towards reformism.

Subsequent failures and decline after 1950 could be wholly attributed to the Cold War, to the post-war boom, consumerism and growing working class prosperity. The pressures were, in fact, building up on the Party to adapt to Cold War propaganda (as it nearly did in 1956 on Hungary), to adjust to an apparent downward trend in class consciousness and militancy. The post-war revival of British imperialism actually strengthened trade union organisation in the short and medium term, because it could afford the concessions that strengthen economism (a narrow trade union obsession with wages and conditions to the detriment of wider political questions and goals). This was reflected into the CP where – aided by the winding-down and dilution of Marxist-Leninist political education – the separation between industrial members and ideological activity widened in the 1950s and 1960s. The influx of petty bourgeois elements in the late 1960s and early 1970s, many under the influence of academic Marxism and even Maoist ultra-leftism, uncorrected by Marxist-Leninist politics and discipline, provided the future leadership of the Eurocommunist faction; they swung over to the right, with only their anti-Sovietism remaining constant.

The latest (1977) *British Road* is in one respect an advance on the 1951 edition. Under the impact of communist influenced mass campaigns in the late 1960s and early 1970s, and possibly in recognition of Party failure at parliamentary elections, it advocates mass struggle outside parliament. This is intended as a means of pressure on a left government, and as a means of support for it against counterrevolutionary moves – but not as the basis for exercising revolutionary state

power. The central role is still to be played by a constitutional parliamentary government, utilising the modestly reformed institutions of the bourgeois state. What is also envisaged in the 1977 programme, however, is not the legislation for socialism in a single parliamentary term – but a series of Labour left governments making deeper and deeper inroads into capitalist power, gradually laying the basis for the construction of socialism. The broad democratic alliance led by the working class that is built up in the course of mass activity is to be aimed explicitly at the capitalist monopolies; in recent years, those communists who uphold this aspect of the *British Road* have been attacked for their 'narrow and sectarian' and 'class reductionist' interpretation!

THE END OF THE ROAD?

Absent from all editions of the *British Road* is any Marxist-Leninist analysis of the bourgeois state, of social democracy, of the leading role of the Communist Party. British imperialism and its impact on the working class movement is played down. Major democratic questions such as women's liberation, racism and national rights are dealt with in a liberal and non-class way, thereby opening the door to a narrow redefinition and relegation of class struggle. The only path to socialism that is mapped out is a peaceful, gradual and constitutional one, although the need to crush counterrevolution (if it is unconstitutional) is mentioned in vague terms; the necessity for the working class and its allies to create their own organs of state power in order to suppress the capitalist class in the face of near certain subversion and counterrevolution, is unmentioned.

Long running right opportunism has resulted in the Party's current crisis. In its most modern and degenerate form, Eurocommunism, it now raises the serious possibility of the organisational liquidation of the Communist Party. These words of Lenin's, written in 1914, should have been heeded:

"Advocacy of class collaboration; abandonment of the idea of socialist revolution and revolutionary methods of struggle; adaptation to bourgeois nationalism; losing sight of the fact that the borders of nationality and country are historically transient; making a fetish of bourgeois legality; renunciation of the class viewpoint and the class struggle for fear of repelling the broad masses of the population (meaning the petty bourgeoisie) – such, doubtless, are the ideological foundations of opportunism." (*The Positions and Tasks of the Socialist International*).

In *State and Revolution* (1917) he attacked:

"The petty bourgeois democrats, those sham socialists who replaced the class struggle by dreams of class harmony, even pictured the socialist transformation in a dreary fashion – not as the overthrow of the rule of the exploiting class, but as the peaceful submission of the minority to the majority which has become aware of its aims. This petty bourgeois utopia, which is inseparable from the idea of the state being above classes, led in practice to the betrayal of the interests of the working classes."

Lenin went on to point out that "only he is a Marxist who extends the recognition of the class struggle to the recognition of the dictatorship of the proletariat". Only an organised struggle against the political liquidation of the Communist Party, including an honest inquiry into the early signs of right opportunism, can prevent the organisational liquidation of communism in Britain.

DISCUSSION – 1

With the rise of Hitler to power in Germany came the destruction of the largest and most influential communist party outside the Soviet Union – KPD. Subsequent developments in Austria and Spain, and the threat posed by the fascist leagues in France, led to the pact signed by the French Communist (PCF) and Socialist Parties and, in Spain, to the formation of a Frente Popular in 1935. Both developments were on the initiative of the respective communist parties and – contrary to popular myth – took place before the seventh Congress of the Comintern in 1935. In France and in Spain the communist parties grew rapidly in size and influence, and both came to support (but not join) Popular Front governments in 1936. Similar policies were adopted in other countries, including Britain, with varying degrees of success.

It is important to emphasise these facts, because some anti-communist elements argue that Popular Frontism in itself was a case of communists subordinating themselves, their influence and even their parties to the social democrats. The opposite was the case, in Spain and France it was the social democrats who were compelled to accept communist initiatives, and these initiatives benefitted the communists vis-a-vis the social democrats in a number of ways. At the same time, of course, new situations and new policies also bring new problems.

The Second World War and ultimately the defeat of fascism produced, in certain instances, contradictory developments in communist parties: progressive developments in central and eastern Europe were paralleled by the 'dissolution' of the CPUSA. It is interesting to note that, at the time, PCF leader Jacques Duclos criticised the US decision – and stated that there were similar tendencies in his own Party. The CPGB actually sent congratulations to Browder on the CPUSA dissolution. Here are examples of how, in different ways, sometimes as part of broader movements, communist parties in the imperialist democracies come under pressure to abandon independent activity. A modern parallel is to be seen in the liquidationist tactics of the current CPGB leadership.

Turning to the problem of social democracy, it is interesting to note the many differing views and ideas expressed on its British version – the Labour Party – particularly from its own followers. A brief look at the Labour Party's origins might be helpful. At the founding conference of the Labour Representation Committee in 1900, the following motion was proposed by J. Macdonald of the Social Democratic Federation ('Marxist'): he proposed the formation of a party "based upon recognition of the class war and having as its ultimate object the socialisation of the means of production, distribution and exchange". This was rejected. Clearly, the Labour Party did not have a Marxist or socialist beginning as has been suggested by some Labour Party groups (*Militant*) and members (Eric Heffer).

The First World War was a turning point for European social democracy. In France and Germany the old parties split, and communist parties were founded. However, in Britain the CP was formed by the combination of a number of small parties and groups. This was a major difference which has influenced the politics of Europe ever since. Communists in Britain were faced with a social democratic party linked to the trade unions, unlike their continental counterparts who worked in trade unions based on political and even religious divisions.

Communist affiliation to the Labour Party is an issue which continues up to the present day. Lenin exerted a major influence on the CPGB's position in the 1920's; he argued in favour of affiliation on the basis of: 1) continued free and unfettered activity as a Communist Party within the Labour Party; 2) improving the CP's weak links with the masses; and 3) working for the election of – and subsequent exposing of – a Labour government. Britain had not yet had a social democratic government – so workers needed to learn from such an experience, and draw the relevant conclusions. The opposing arguments at the time were perhaps best expressed by J.T. Murphy, who concentrated on the class basis of the Labour Party and its role as leader – or non-leader as he saw it – of the working class. The Lenin position narrowly won the day, but there still is a clear need to update, redefine and advance communists' attitude to social democracy, particularly in Britain where social democracy has been dominant among organised workers.

A close look at the political development from *For Soviet Britain* to the *British Road to Socialism* is a useful exercise, to see how programmes develop and are worked out in changing circumstances.

DISCUSSION – 2

"I talk democracy to these men and women. I tell them they have the vote and that theirs is the kingdom, the power and the glory. I say to them, You are supreme; exercise your power. They say: That's right; tell us what to do; and I tell them, I say, Exercise your vote intelligently by voting for me. And they do. That's democracy; and a splendid thing it is too for putting the right men in the right place."

"Mr Henderson and Mr Clynes can no

more make our political machine produce socialism than they can a sewing machine produce fried eggs. It was not made for that purpose; and those who work it are still working the capitalist machine, which will not produce anything but capitalism."

Both of these quotations are from the Fabian, George Bernard Shaw. He was clearly way ahead of many who claim to be Marxist-Leninists!

The Communist Party of Great Britain has suffered since its inception from reformist social democratic weaknesses. The argument that all was lovely until 1981 or 1983, or 1985 or even 1977 with the new draft of the *British Road to Socialism*, just cannot be sustained. Santiago Carrillo, the former general secretary of the CP of Spain and one of the founders of Eurocommunism, cited the *British Road* as the archetypal Eurocommunist programme a decade or more ago. Whatever date things were supposed to have gone wrong can only be established on the basis of developing a proper knowledge not merely of the timetable of events in Party history, but more essentially by strengthening the theoretical and ideological basis of our Marxism.

Two major questions need to be addressed urgently: firstly, what is the role of the state; and secondly, what is social democracy and what is its role?

The two questions are intimately linked, and those wishing to become Marxists must tackle them. Only by understanding these from a Marxist perspective can we then see the function of parliamentarism and Labourism, and begin to undertake the critical reassessment necessary of the policy of the CPGB towards these phenomena which has been distorting *British Marxism* since the inception of the CP and even before. Key reading must include Lenin's *The State and Revolution*:

"The reason why the omnipotence of wealth is more certain in a democratic republic is that it does not depend on individual defects in the political machinery or on the faulty political shell of capitalism. A democratic republic is the best possible political shell for capitalism, and, therefore, once capital has gained possession of this very best shell...it establishes its power so securely, so firmly, that no change of persons, institutions, or parties in the bourgeois republic can shake it."

In this pamphlet, Lenin shows clearly the role of the German revisionist Karl Kautsky. We in Britain have failed to heed this lesson and have, consistently, not merely not exposed the Kautskys in our own movement – but have, in essence, followed them...with disastrous consequences.

When we begin to understand the role of the state, we can begin to understand the role of parliamentarism. The difference between Bolshevik participation in a country where bourgeois parliamentarism and class domination had not been consolidated – and the consequent possibility of a revolutionary tactical exploitation of such conditions – and participation in parliamentarism in a developed bourgeois democracy, needs urgent investigation.

We need to look critically at the strategy or lack of one for building a Marxist communist party over the period from 1918; to look too at the disasters attendant on following a parliamentary road, not only in Britain but elsewhere such as Italy, Chile, Portugal, Spain, India, Greece, Guyana etc. We need to recognise the need for a break with the world view of bourgeois democracy and its 'best possible shell' of parliament.

On parliamentarism, William Morris (whose name the Eurocommunists try to hijack) pleaded against participation:

"This plea is founded on the necessity of making the class struggle clear to the workers, of pointing out to them that while monopoly of production exists, they can only exist as its slaves; so that the parliament and all other institutions at present existing are maintained for the purpose of upholding this slavery...That while the bourgeois rule lasts they can indeed take part in it, but only on the terms that they shall do nothing to attack the grand edifice of which that slavery is the foundation. Nay, more than that: that they may point out what concessions may be necessary for the ruling class to make in order that the slavery of the workers may last on; in a word, that to vote for the continuance of their own slavery is all the parliamentary action that they will be allowed to take under the present regime." (May Morris: *William Morris – Artist and Socialist*)

George Lukacs argued (*Political Writings*,

p 55): "Parliament, the bourgeoisie's very own instrument, can therefore only ever be a defensive weapon for the proletariat... For every Communist Party, then, taking up parliamentary activity implies the realisation and the admission that revolution is unthinkable in the foreseeable future... for a Communist Party, parliamentary activity can never be anything more than a preparation for the real struggle, can never be the actual struggle itself... the workers' council spells the death of social democracy. Whereas parliamentarism is social democracy."

Finally, to turn to Labourism and support for the Labour Party, and the long standing nonsense of CP affiliation to it. It is necessary for comrades to re-read critically Lenin's interventions. But it is also necessary for comrades to re-examine the arguments of William Gallacher and Sylvia Pankhurst etc. Lenin's *Left-Wing Communism* should be read, of course, but with great care. Look also at the facts - at the changes since Lenin's interventions in 1920 up to the present day. Note Lenin's apparent lack of knowledge and understanding of the position even in 1920. Palme Dutt and Pollitt in their *Thesis on the National and International Battlefronts in The Communist* in 1928 took the view that there "has been no change to warrant an advance from Lenin's line in 1920". Bukharin, however, voiced a different view at the CPSU Congress:

"Some British comrades argue that in his *Left-Wing Communism* Lenin spoke of the necessity of helping the Labour Party to power. In this connection may I point out that it is a great mistake to assume Lenin imagined it would be sufficient to vote for the Labour Party and nothing more. On the contrary, he suggested a compromise, a division of seats etc. But now it would not do to make use of these arguments of Lenin, seeing that the situation is quite different. It can now hardly be said that we must push the Labour Party to a position of power, since the Labour Party has been already in power. When Lenin wrote those words, he had in mind the possibility of unmasking the Labour Party. But we must not pass over facts which belong to the past. On the contrary." (*Inprecor*, 29.12.27)

A fresh look at the value of Lenin's original position as well as the changes through 1927 and 1928 would not be out of order. Since Bukharin's intervention, meanwhile, we have many years of Labour governments under our belt. Are we still to keep hefting the scrolls of Lenin out of the Ark?

The Amsterdam Sub-Bureau of the Communist International wrote in 1920:

"A resolution passed at the February Conference in Amsterdam, and two letters written to comrades of the Independent Labour Party, have been interpreted differently. It is for this reason that we wish to accentuate our opinion briefly as follows:

1. In accordance with the resolution mentioned above, we are of the opinion that communists should not be affiliated, either directly or indirectly, to political organisations that hold the principles of the Second International. For England such an organisation, no doubt, is the Labour Party.

...4. Since we agree with those communists in England that object to participation in the Labour Party, we are of the opinion that they should not give up their attitude on the plea of unity. Much as we would like to see a united communist party in England, it may be better to postpone this ideal than to compromise on important issues.

5. We strongly appeal to our English friends to unite on the basis of no affiliation to the Labour Party, as we clearly see the catastrophe that will follow the coming into power of a parliamentary Labour government. Warning in advance may help to unite the workers - after the failure will become evident - under the banner of communism. To achieve this result it is necessary, however, to clearly define our attitude towards the methods of the Labour Party. A compromise in such a way that local organisations are allowed a policy that is considered objectionable, as a general method, must lead to confusion when accepted by a united Communist Party."

Before he went completely off the rails, J.T. Murphy made the case in a letter of 20 April 1920 why affiliation to the Labour Party was a disaster. Sixty years later his arguments are still generally sound. He listed 10 points advanced by the British Socialist Party - a founding element of the CPGB - and rebutted them one at a time. It is another document that needs to be read. To the claim that

the Labour Party is the working class organised, he replied: No, it is "the political reflex of the trade union bureaucracy and the petty bourgeois... Contact with the working class is not, and never has been, dependent upon contact with the Labour Party". To the claim that affiliation is "necessary in order that the Communist Party may be represented at Labour Party conferences and influence its decisions..." he responds:

"This implies that the Communist Party is either intent on capturing the Labour Party, or passing revolutionary resolutions for reactionaries to carry out. If the first, the policy is fundamentally wrong... If the second, then the masses are betrayed and their revolutionary fervour used to strengthen the forces of reaction. This proposition also indicates that the BSP does not clearly understand the functions of a Communist Party in its struggle for power. It is evidently content to be a spur to another party for whose actions it refuses responsibility, instead of a strong revolutionary party leading the masses to action."

Is this not the position that the CPGB has adopted for many years? There is much to be read and much to be discussed, because a debate is long overdue, urgent and vital.

DISCUSSION - 3

The low level of Marxist theory in the Party generally is accentuated in Wales. In the late 1940s, the Welsh Committee of the CP published a pamphlet entitled *Fighters for the People: A Record of the Activities of Communist Councillors in Wales* the role of these councillors is stated in the first paragraph:

"Communists can give both vigour and vision to all local authorities. In the case of those councils which are Labour-controlled, a few communist councillors - or even one - can strengthen Labour's hands and infuse greater determination and drive into its efforts to improve the people's lot."

In other words, the communists and Communist Party were to act as moral back stops for the labour movement. Reference is constantly made in the pamphlet to the moral qualities of these councillors (qualities which they undoubtedly possessed): "sincerity and conviction... honest working class activity... tenacity and doggedness... has earned the respect and support of all his Labour colleagues..."

Communism as a faith - in place of Marxism-Leninism as revolutionary theory - is a major cause of the Party's atrophy in Wales. Very few members of today's Welsh Committee actually think; they feel, very strongly, about those issues which should concern communists, and above all they feel loyalty to the Party. That is how it is that we have comrades who would, in private at least, declare admiration for Stalin, and yet who support blindly the present Eurocommunist dominated leadership in Wales and in London.

The Party's difficulties must be traced back far further than the advent of the Eurocommunists. They have their roots in the Party's low theoretical development, its British nationalism, and - prior to the 20th Congress of the CPSU - an uncritical and mechanistic admiration of the Soviet Union. After Khrushchev's revelations at that congress, the Hungarian crisis in 1956 etc., that uncritical and mechanistic admiration was replaced by a mechanistic resentment of the Soviet Union. Isn't it this which let in the Eurocommunists? Weren't they seen as the nice bright intelligent young people who would show the British people how moral, democratic and acceptable the Party and its members really were?

The Eurocommunists who now dominate the Party are petty bourgeois radicals who see their activities as a crusade to degut the Party of its working class combativeness. They no longer use Marxism even as a tool for analysis. For example, a recent article in *Marxism Today* by Martin Jacques and Stuart Hall saw Bob Geldof's 'Live Aid' as a positive response to Thatcher's philosophy of greed and individualism. But one does not even have to be a Marxist to see charity as one of the great Victorian values, as a component part of the greedy individualistic ethos of capitalism - and not an alternative to it.

DISCUSSION - 4

There is a risk of throwing out the baby with the bathwater. Really, the most remarkable thing about the history of the CPGB is not the

reformist backsliding, which can be traced at virtually any time in the Party's history if we look hard enough; the remarkable thing is that Britain has had a Communist Party at all, and that its record contains much solid achievement. Britain is a difficult place in which to build a revolutionary party - it is, after all, the oldest major imperialist power. In other countries communist parties were founded when large sections of socialist parties broke away, radicalised by the First World War, the Russian Revolution and the years immediately following; this was the case, for example, in France, Italy and Chile. In Britain, these same events produced what is now known as clause 4 of the Labour Party constitution, originally recorded as:

"To secure for the producers by hand or by brain the full fruits of their industry, and the most equitable distribution thereof that may be possible, upon the basis of common ownership of the means of production and the best obtainable system of popular administration and control of each industry or service."

Radical, yes - but there was no significant breakaway from the reformist Labour Party. The Communist Party was therefore created by bringing together several small 'parties' and groups, most of which had never been in the Labour Party.

During the whole history of the Communist Party, communists in Britain have been in a small minority in a labour movement whose dominant outlook has been reformist. This adverse balance of forces within the movement itself has always exerted a strong influence on the Party. However, if our assessment of the present situation for capitalism is broadly correct, there is not much more mileage in reformism. The problem, therefore, is patiently to unravel these confusions, and begin to establish positions more consistent with those of the international communist movement. To do this, we need to achieve clarity on four major questions: 1) the nature of imperialism; 2) the role of the state; 3) the nature of social democracy; and 4) the role of a Marxist-Leninist party.

OPENING - WHICH WAY FOR LABOUR? AND THE ALTERNATIVE ECONOMIC STRATEGY

THIS is intended to highlight some aspects of the political strategy set out in the Communist Campaign Group's second pamphlet, *Which Way for Labour: A Communist Perspective for the Labour Movement* (1986), aspects which require discussion and re-appraisal. This opening does not, therefore, provide a balanced assessment of the pamphlet, in that material which is not contentious is referred to only briefly, if at all.

The Introduction. The pamphlet opens by stating the seriousness of the situation at present facing the British working class and emphasising that the necessary lead is not being given by the leadership of the Labour Party or the TUC. The reason for the absence of an appropriate political lead from these quarters is explained in terms of the role of the 'soft left' and the Eurocommunists. This is superficial and subjective. There is a key question here - Why does the Labour and TUC leadership behave as it does? - which is never satisfactorily answered in this pamphlet.

Counterposed to the inactivity/collaboration of the Labour and TUC leadership is the Alternative Economic Strategy (AES). Several formulations here are very emphatic and should be noted, because we will have to return to them later. The AES is described as "the movement's own independent programme for economic advance and for socialism" (p 2); abandonment of the AES is equated with "removing socialism from the agenda of struggle" (p 3); a direct link is made between "the AES and the struggle for socialism" (p 3); it is argued that what is needed is "total commitment to the policies of the AES and to the struggle for socialism" (p.3); and it is stated that the purpose of the pamphlet is to enable the case to be made for "the AES and for socialism as the labour movement's answer to the crisis" (p 3).

Chapter 1 - The Tory Offensive. The historical introduction to this chapter shows con-

fusion. First it is asserted that capitalism was weaker after the Second World War, then the early post-war years are described as an exceptional period which saw sustained growth in the capitalist economies. This muddle is not important for the purposes of this pamphlet, but it shows that we all need to read some more political economy.

Section 2, emphasising the importance of Britain's position as an imperialist power, and describing the 1970-74 Heath Government - particularly in its first two years - as a predecessor of the Thatcher regime, is one of a number of sections of the pamphlet which make a welcome change from the liberal nonsense current in *Marxism Today*.

Section 3, on the failure of the Labour government of 1974-79 is also very sound, explaining that: "In essence the class objectives of Labour's right-wing leadership were fundamentally those of Heath and the Tories". If this is correct, which it clearly is, shouldn't it lead us to ask some pretty basic questions about the nature of the Labour Party?

Sections 4 to 7 on Tory strategy, policies and results are useful; but Section 8, however, shows again a tendency to avoid asking unpleasant questions. It opens, in fact, with a crucial question - "What then is the general state of the trade union and labour movement today?" - but no real answer is given and the subject is quickly changed.

Chapter 2 - The Alternative Economic Strategy. Never mind the detail, what is important is the broad political argument. First, it is asserted that the AES "was collectively formulated and developed by the CP in particular, by Labour's left wing and eventually by the TUC", and that many of its key proposals, as well as a statement of its overriding objective were incorporated in Labour's election manifesto in 1974, but were never implemented by the Labour government. This raises two questions - firstly, is it at all accurate to say that the Labour Party or TUC ever adopted a set of policies which were understood as a socialist orientated AES? Secondly, how is it that the Labour Party when in power regularly performs such a complete about turn that it represents class interests diametrically opposed to those it would, when in opposition, wish us to believe it represents?

Section 2 of Chapter 2 expounds the AES in outline. Section 3 asks the all important question - "Who will pay?" - and argues that the programme can be paid for by cuts in arms expenditure, price controls, investment controls, re-nationalisations, further nationalisation of key multinational companies, major banks and financial institutions, and of North Sea oil, and also advocates planning agreements, capital-export controls, import controls and withdrawal from the EEC.

Two questions arise here. The first results from omission: the internationalist dimension of the AES is referred to only in passing, but no attempt is made to assess the economic returns from British imperialism, or to consider the economic, social and political implications of a non-imperialist economic policy. This is an old fault on the British left, but precisely because it is such a persistent blind spot, attention must be drawn to it. The second question, which concerns the political implications of the proposals outlined above, is the central question which regularly recurs throughout the pamphlet, and which will be returned to.

Section 4 outlines the nature of the resistance to be expected from the ruling class. The means proposed to counter this are weak. Mention is made of "the widest possible democratic involvement", but there is no mention of the need to build alternative organs of power.

Democratisation of the media and the civil service is proposed, but there is no mention of what would need to be done with the police or the armed forces. At no point is it made clear that the working class will at some stage need to build its own state, not merely taking over the bourgeois state. Page 19 clouds the issue by talking of the state in non-class terms, and makes purely rhetorical use of the concept of democratic centralism in a passage which links mass extra-parliamentary struggle with the use of a (still-capitalist) state by the working class against capital! - "Steps must be taken to ensure that the central power of the state is effectively utilised to limit and severely restrict the powers of resistance of the opponents of the AES". This is hopeless confusion: whose state are we talking about?

Section 5 contains the fundamental confusion as to the nature of the programme being

put forward. On page 20 it is asserted first that: "The AES in itself is not a socialist programme...[but it is] the indispensable prerequisite for the advance to socialism". At the bottom of the same page we read that "the AES directly brings into play the question of state power and the question of its use by the working class... the fight for the AES directly presupposes, and coincides with, the fight for socialism". So, is the AES a socialist programme or not, and what are the implications, either way?

Chapter 3 – Labour's Right Wing Alternative. In contrast to the confused thinking in Chapter 2, this critique of right wing Labour is effective and timely. Only one thing is missing – an answer to the question which so clearly arises from these pages: Why is Labour's programme as elaborated by Hattersley and Kinnock so well tailored to the needs of capital?...

Chapter 4 – The Dangers of Left Realignment. Continuing the argument begun in Chapter 3, this chapter again gives an effective reply to the current pseudo-left misrepresentations.

Chapter 5 – The Way Ahead. In this last chapter, however, all the problems return in concentrated form. The central concept is that of a Labour government of a new type. In support of this notion it is argued that "a Labour government should execute its class tasks on behalf of working people", yet we have just read Chapter 3 which explains clearly that Labour governments operate on behalf of the capitalist class; so what is the class character of the Labour Party?

Page 43 outlines the scenario of a Kinnock-led right wing Labour government leading next time around to the return of an even more reactionary Tory government – which is a very realistic assessment. Yet the alternative which we are asked to accept is that Kinnock and Hattersley can be compelled to implement the AES against their own wishes. What sort of a movement will be required to achieve this Herculean feat is left unexplained. In particular, the role of the Communist Party is unexplained. The relevant passage begins by referring to the CP as the think-tank of the left and then tails off into a description of the Party's present plight.

THE NEED TO BROADEN DISCUSSION

The pamphlet under review is much clearer about what we are against than about what we are for. Chapters 1, 3 and 4 set out positions opposed to those of the present CP leadership, and on all the major issues dealt with in them there will be broad agreement. Chapters 2 and 5 are basically a restatement of the Party's position of ten years ago, with a little up-dating.

The pamphlet therefore reflects the view that the problems of the Party have arisen during the last five years, and that it is only necessary to revert to the policies of the 1970s for Eurocommunism to be defeated and for everything to be alright. A close examination of this pamphlet, however, should show that it is necessary to discuss another view – namely, that it was precisely the weaknesses and contradictions of the *British Road* (and, incidentally, Santiago Carrillo referred to the first - 1951 – edition of the *British Road* as the founding document of Eurocommunism, and he should know).

The central problem is the concept of a new type of Labour government. Both the *British Road* and *Which Way for Labour?* attempt to tell us that the decisive levers of economic power (multinationals, banks, City financial institutions) can be taken into public ownership by a Labour government, which will be able to accomplish all this because it does not amount to a socialist programme (!). Then, carried away with enthusiasm by this prospect, they assure us that the AES is a socialist programme after all. In this hazy vision, the role of the Communist Party appears to be little more than a ginger group. Britain must be one of the few countries – if not the only one – where the CP has a programme that relies on a social democratic party to carry through the socialist revolution.

In order to begin sorting out this confusion, it would be useful to broaden the discussion in two ways:

● Firstly, by considering the relevant experiences of other communist parties, for example the French, Greek and Chilean; and indeed the experiences of other Labour and socialist

Party and the French and Greek socialist parties.

● Secondly, by considering the traditional distinction between a minimum and maximum programme and reviewing the *British Road* in this light.

DISCUSSION – 1

The governments of the late 1960s and 1970s, Labour and Tory, all tried to hamstring the trade unions. The Labour government under Wilson produced its *In Place of Strife* White Paper in 1969; the Tories put the Industrial Relations Act on the statute book in 1972, imposed a Pay Code which the miners broke in the same year, and then tried to force Phase Three on the NUM – which led to the downfall of the Heath government in 1974. This was very significant because, for the first time, industrial action led in effect to the downfall of a government in Britain – the answer to those who think these things can (or should) only be done through parliament. The Labour governments that followed under Wilson and Callaghan had the Social Contract, worked out with the TUC leadership, which also included a series of pay restraint policies. These pay norms were rubber stamped by Jack Jones of the TGWU and Hugh (Lord) Scanlon of the AUEW, both of whom had been leaders in the previous struggles against wage controls and anti-union laws.

The Communist Party was the driving force in the campaigns against these measures. We exposed the ideas behind them for what they really represented – making capitalism work, trying to solve its crises, at the expense of the working class. It was the battle of ideas that had to be won. We had to put our ideas to the workers, to show them there were *real alternatives*, thereby getting them involved in struggle. To do this, communists worked deeply and patiently *within* the labour movement, in the trade unions and with the Labour left. Conferences were won. On *In Place of Strife* and statutory wage controls the Labour leadership was forced by the movement to change course – although not as much as we would have liked. In the heat of these battles, on this wave of activity, the AES was formulated as a programme for struggle.

We were able to influence Labour Party conferences and election manifestos because of the close links between the trade unions and the Labour Party. It must be remembered that the Labour Party can, for historical reasons, claim to be the party of the working class. Lenin pointed out that it was not just like every other social democratic party. He referred in 1920 to "the unique character of the British Labour Party, whose very structure is so unlike that of the political parties usual on the European continent" (*Left Wing Communism – An Infantile Disorder*). The same year he described it in the *Theses of the 2nd Congress of the Communist International* as "a federation of all trade union organisations of the working class". He also said:

"It has a very unusual structure to be found in no other country. It is an organisation that embraces four million workers out of the six or seven million organised in trade unions".

The proportion is even higher today – and that link has been massively confirmed in the 40 or so union political fund ballots we have had recently. Again, on the same occasion, Lenin argued that:

"The British Labour Party is in a very special position: it is a highly original type of party, or rather, it is not at all a party in the ordinary sense of the word. It is made up of members of all trade unions, and has a membership of about four million, and allows sufficient freedom to all affiliated political parties".

Of course, at the time of these statements (which were endorsed by the Comintern) Lenin was arguing in favour of the CP of Great Britain seeking affiliation to the Labour Party in order to more effectively influence the mass of the workers.

The role of the Communist Party was – and still is to have that influence, to change the balance between left and right within the trade unions and the Labour Party. We do this by applying a Marxist-Leninist analysis and by involving workers in struggle. That is what the AES is about – getting workers to fight for change. It is not a socialist programme in itself, but it puts forward demands that will raise consciousness in the battle of ideas, and raise the confidence of workers.

The demands are ones that the advanced sections of the movement can unite around, and take back to their union organisations and members. If a Labour government can be forced along some of that road, it will create the conditions that favour further advance – and bring nearer the outright struggle for the overthrow of capitalism.

DISCUSSION – 2

The implementation of the programme contained in the AES assumes the election of a Labour government of a new type. This seems to be based on false optimism, and as such is very dubious. This raises the question as to what will happen to the programme if a right wing Labour government is elected at the next election, or – for that matter – if a hung parliament is the outcome. The answer is quite simple: the programme will not see the light of day. Demoralisation of many of those who have fought for and supported the AES would be one result.

The philosophy that appears to be behind the AES contains a tinge of reformism, tending to reinforce the credibility – in the eyes of the working class – of social democracy. It does not alert the working class to the real dangers of class betrayal likely to be perpetrated by a Labour government, even by a Labour government of a new type. Social democracy has the basic philosophy of reformism, which is shared even by the left wing elements of such a party; as such, the probability of a Labour government implementing this programme, even in part, is not very great. There is also the danger of perpetuating the erroneous concept that the struggle of the working class should be largely dependent upon the parliamentary struggle, thus negating the vital necessity of the working class using its united collective strength to achieve political objectives through extraparlimentary action. Furthermore, the outlook of the AES gives social democracy the leading role in the working class movement, and therefore denies the vanguard position of a revolutionary party, a communist party.

The AES should be about encouraging the working class to struggle for the programme, irrespective of which party is in office, and using extraparlimentary channels to do so. The workers should be told bluntly that the AES can only be implemented through such means – and not through relying on any type of Labour government.

DISCUSSION – 3

Which Way for Labour? has been very well received by Labour Party activists, even those who are influenced by Trotskyism. They approve of it whole heartedly. Does this not indicate that communists are still playing the historical role of propping up the Labour left – when we should be *challenging* their alignment with social democracy? This was also a problem with the *British Road to Socialism*: Labour Party members read it and agree with it (including the role it lays down for the CP) – and find in it a *confirmation* of why they should be in the Labour Party! After all, the *British Road* requires a left wing Labour Party to play a central role in the revolutionary transformation.

Neither *Which Way for Labour?* nor the *British Road* challenges the commitment of readers to social democracy, putting the overwhelming case for a mass influence communist party based on Marxism-Leninism – a party which can only be built by the most thoughtful and most militant elements on the left coming to it – including those who are at present in the Labour Party.

DISCUSSION – 4

We must bear in mind the political context in which *Which Way for Labour?* was produced. Firstly, the Communist Party leadership had launched a 'debate' about the AES in late 1985, intending to revise it in a rightward direction or to abandon it altogether. This was to be done under the guise of 'feminism', 'anti-racism' etc. – but we all knew what end result was intended. An immediate counter-attack was necessary to defend basic class positions – for example, against any kind of incomes policy. Secondly, for any chance of success the counter attack had to take into account certain realities – such as the founding statements of the Communist Campaign

Group, and the importance of working with our non communist allies in the labour movement in defence of the AES and of the *Morning Star*.

In many important respects, the pamphlet is politically correct and very useful: it identifies the origins of the Thatcher strategy in the defeat of Heath's policies; it has an internationalist dimension, locating Britain's economic position in the world capitalist economy (pages 18 and 19), and touching upon some other international considerations such as the debt crisis, the International Monetary Fund, the EEC and neo-colonialism (pages 18, 19, 35, and 36).

In particular, the pamphlet sounds a very realistic and warning note when dealing with the danger of a Kinnock government paving the way for an even more reactionary Tory government.

When the Labour and Communist Parties are moving to the right, assisted by well practiced demagoguery and a misuse of the CP's reputation and traditions, the pamphlet holds the line, with arguments and demands that can rally wide scale opposition to the rightward drift. Chapter 4, on the dangers of left realignment, is a superb analysis of the Eurocommunists and their strategy. *Which Way for Labour?* also argues for an immediate ideological struggle against the right wing and pseudo-left trends in the movement, against Kinnock's opportunism, Eurocommunism and non-class politics. Launching that struggle around an agreed minimum set of positions has been of the utmost urgency. We could not hold fire until we had completed a new debate among ourselves, nor could we risk an immediate narrowing of the base at the start of that fightback.

There are, however, some fundamental weaknesses in the pamphlet, on questions of the state and revolution, social democracy and the role of the Communist Party. The mixing up of minimum and maximum demands is not helped by the urge to respond to Eurocommunist efforts to remove socialism from the agenda. It was felt to be essential that the pamphlet project socialism as the objective of politicised class struggle – which it does in several places. It is, of course, no coincidence that as the Eurocommunists have abandoned the defence and projection of existing socialism, so they are moving towards abandoning it as an objective in Britain.

Some demands in the AES, such as the nationalisation of the banks and financial institutions, would undoubtedly require a new stage for their successful implementation, namely that of working class revolutionary state power. Many of the others are realisable in some form before such a stage. It is these latter demands that form the main substance of the AES – hence the statement on page 20: "The AES is not a socialist programme", which is part of a clear and unambiguous passage that should take precedence over less clear and highly polemical phrases that can be found elsewhere.

Criticisms of the pamphlet in no way cancel out its value. However its relationship to socialism is formulated, the AES contains many demands that arise directly from basic class principles. The widest possible sale of the pamphlet, and the greatest possible discussion of its contents, will be of immense value to communists and to the wider movement. Its contradictions and weaknesses are, after all, the reflections of imperialism and the condition of the working class movement into the Communist Party – and will take some time to unravel and overcome. This must be done in concrete conditions, when immediate and short term economic and ideological struggles are taking place – and which communists must be in the front line of.

Which Way for Labour? raises the fundamental question of the relationship between communists and left social democrats. The Party in Britain has chosen the position of capitulation and non-criticism for a number of decades. A major problem now is, therefore, how do we develop the many areas of co-operation that exist, build up the alliances in joint struggle – while avoiding right opportunism on the one hand, and left sectarianism on the other? How to expand the common work, while at the same time engaging in principled debate and propaganda about our differences? In Britain, we are short of successful precedents.

The views expressed in these papers do not necessarily reflect the collective view of the CCG in South Wales or of the Communist Campaign Group centrally.